

Establishing a Youth Council in a Local Art Gallery or Art Museum

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Abstract

This Major Research Paper focused on the need for youth arts councils in the Niagara Region. Participation in youth councils offers adolescents a wealth of enriching experiences that can alter both their worldview as well as their understanding of themselves. On a youth arts council, adolescents can discover a new world of art and its cultural value. They can express themselves through their own art while sharing the experience with other teenagers who are doing the same. They can connect with these like-minded teens as they achieve personal goals and contribute to the welfare of the community. Therefore, in an era in which people are concerned about teens' overreliance on mobile devices and other so-called screen addictions, getting adolescents off of the couch or cell phone and onto a more participatory, productive path is important. This study illustrates how Niagara's art galleries and art museums are cultural and historical ambassadors that can and must play a major role in helping students connect possibilities with engaging purpose while having fun.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the most crucial time in an individual's life. It is a time when minds can be opened to new ideas and concepts; personalities can flourish and shape the adult that the adolescent will become. In artistically inclined adolescents, the teen years present opportunities to grow and gather knowledge that will take their imaginations to limitless experiences as the “meaningful engagement in arts education can have a life-changing impact on teens” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 2). Youth councils in art galleries and art museums are community associations that encourage and unleash the potential, positive power of adolescent energy and inspire growth in the artistic drive that is still developing. Websites of the various galleries with existing youth councils, such as the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) and the Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery (The Power Plant), provide similar definitions of youth councils. A youth council is a free group attended by adolescent art enthusiasts who periodically gather in a gallery or museum setting to individually or collectively work on topics, ideas, or motives that are inspired by them. In this artistically engaging process, youth expand their creativity as well as their communication, leadership, collaboration, and social skills (AGO, n.d.a.; Institute of Contemporary Arts [ICA], 2016; The Power Plant, 2014). Establishing a youth council in a local art gallery or art museum has many benefits to the community and, ultimately, will empower adolescents to have a voice in the choices that are made for their group and in determining what is important in their lives.

The concept of creating a handbook to help establish a youth council in an art gallery or art museum stemmed from the fact that Ontario's Niagara Region, rich in so many cultural opportunities, currently lacks organized arts engagement for adolescents

outside of the secondary school setting or private opportunities. An investigation of the websites of the five galleries and six historical museums located in this area shows no evidence that any kind of free arts education organizations for youth in their teenage years exist in the area. The goal of this Major Research Paper (MRP) was to research youth councils and to create a handbook to establish a youth council. Achievement of this goal could potentially offer the youth of our community the opportunities to help the arts continue to flourish in this culturally rich area. It will support artistic youth in their pursuit of further knowledge in art theory and practice and it can especially appeal to those students who cannot include visual arts in their school timetables. The goal of a local youth council in an art gallery or art museum will complement the visual arts programs in high schools and, above all, will introduce inquisitive adolescents to the exciting world of art.

It is important that adolescent voices are heard and their problems articulated through artistic expression. Norma Rosso (2010), a British specialist in Art Education and cultural diversity programs, emphasizes the importance of youth involvement in arts organizations in *Youth-Led Practice in Galleries, Museums and Archives*: “This is the right moment to listen to what young people have to say and devise new and creative ways of involving them” (p. 4). Any organization that gets youth actively involved in positive and affirmative opportunities needs to be encouraged. While there are many opportunities for adolescents to be involved in recreational sports as a means of personal and athletic skill development, there are too few opportunities for students interested in visual arts and art appreciation. Youth councils in art galleries and art museums would be a welcome option for adolescents as they offer creative and artistic engagement outside of the school environment through independent or collaborative projects.

Research Focus

This MRP, titled *Establishing a Youth Council in a Local Art Gallery or Art Museum*, is divided into two parts. The first part introduces the need for establishing a youth council in the galleries or art museums within the Niagara Region and provides information about youth councils and their role in the art galleries or art museums. The second part is a handbook that guides educational leaders in those institutions through the steps needed to successfully establish youth councils in art galleries or art museums. This study will attempt to answer the following questions:

1. What is a youth council and what is its purpose in an art gallery or art museum?
2. How does one establish a youth council in a local art gallery or art museum?

Justification for the Research Focus

I come from Slovenia, a small country in Central Europe. When I reflect on my own experience as a teenager, being involved in the arts gave me an opportunity to grow. Being able to express myself artistically and to be motivated by the various opportunities, involvement in the arts presented a variety of lenses on my outlook to life. My study of art was pursued along two avenues—school and involvement in a community art. Art also brought balance to my other passion, which was playing hockey. Hockey nourished my physical well-being while art nourished my soul and intellect. I understand through first-hand experience the many benefits and life-long values that being on a youth council can bring about in one's life.

Ontario's Niagara Region boasts more than 15 museums and galleries. According to their websites, not one includes a youth council in their programming, and this motivated me to take action. This lack of potential partners in art education struck me as a gap in the community that needed to be addressed. It also struck me as an

opportunity to give back, not only to those who taught me in Slovenia but also to give back to my new community in the Niagara Region. With this project, I am hoping to provide the initial spark to widen art appreciation and the potential ability of youth in exploring this fascinating subject through youth councils.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to write a paper and an accompanying handbook with information on how to create a youth council in a local art gallery or art museum. This paper expounds on the benefits of youth councils for art galleries or art museums and also offers the governing bodies of such organizations a new or renewed point of view that can reshape their commitment to youth in their community.

The handbook provides information to facilitate the steps required to create a youth council in an art gallery or art museum. Once a youth council in a gallery or museum has been established, adolescents will have the opportunity to be more connected with both the arts and the community and will be encouraged to express their own ideas about the newly established council and its activities.

Outline of the Remainder of the Document

The remaining sections of this document provide and explain key information on establishing a youth council in a local art gallery or art museum. The next chapter presents a literature review of the available resources for those who are interested in the realization of an active youth council. While the scholarly literature is somewhat limited, the literature review nonetheless provides a point of departure that can direct the reader to pertinent websites and articles. The sections that follow include a discussion of the justification for creating the handbook, considerations in the development of the handbook, and culminate with the handbook itself.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature examined for the purposes of this MRP has been divided into two clusters. The first cluster interprets what is already known about youth councils and the benefits of arts learning in a non-school environment. The second cluster of literature concentrates on the actual process of policy making and its benefits for a youth council in an art gallery or art museum.

Youth Councils

When reviewing the literature related to youth councils in art galleries or art museums, one fact became very clear: there was not much found in text books, nor is there much literature to be found on that topic in other resources either. The only information I found that exists on art gallery or art museum youth councils is found on art gallery or art museum websites. There are many different terms used on the websites of these galleries to describe collaboration with adolescents. Examples of these terms are teen arts group, power youth, or the name of the gallery with the noun “youth” attached. However, for the purpose of this research, the term *youth council* will be used.

There are many types of youth councils that address different needs in different communities. Whatever the focus of the youth councils, their commonality exists in the belief that youth councils “help to improve their community as well as build their personal advocacy and leadership abilities” (Youth Power, 2007, p. 1). Youth councils focus on the talents of diverse youth to provide advice and constructive assistance to community organizations and their governing bodies. Ultimately, the goal is to develop in youth the sense of ambassadorship and leadership to improve not only the community, but also themselves (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 9).

Toronto's The Power Plant gallery works with children of all ages and involves adolescents in their program very well. The program focused on adolescents is called *Power Youth* and it "connects local contemporary artists-in-residence with youth in priority neighbourhoods providing youth with new tools for self-expression and the opportunity to gain skills in creativity, communication and collaboration" (The Power Plant, 2014, para. 1). In 2004, the Toronto City Council and the United Way used the term "priority neighbourhoods" to identify areas within the city that were in need of "key services, including libraries, schools, community centres, settlement and employment services" ("What Are Priority Neighbourhoods," 2008, para. 4) in order "to reduce crime, increase opportunities for young people and improve services for people in underserved areas" ("What Are Priority Neighbourhoods," 2008, para. 3). In large cities with areas of pressing need, youth councils connect adolescents with artists to ensure "meaningful engagement... to enrich the lives of community members and extend cultural understanding beyond the gallery walls" (The Power Plant, 2014, para. 1). However, not all youth councils are established to battle negative societal influences. Some are organized primarily with the purpose of personal, intellectual, and artistic growth for all youth whatever their socio-economic circumstances.

Power Youth is one of many examples of established youth councils that contribute to enriching lives of adolescents. Partnering with the *Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada*, the youth council provides contemporary art activities for youth from the Weston–Mount Dennis and Toronto area. The goals are to educate youth about potential careers in the arts and to build their capacity to make strong decisions for their future (The Power Plant, 2014). Throughout the 2015-2016 calendar year, *Power Youth*

“equipped over 80 youth with new tools for self-expression, providing them with opportunities to gain skills in creativity, communication and collaboration” (The Power Plant, 2016, para. 1).

The AGO is another art gallery with a vibrant youth council. Located in Toronto, the AGO has a youth council that was established in the late 1990s. The AGO youth council meets weekly “to design programming that is relevant and responds to the needs of youth in the Greater Toronto Area” (AGO, n.d.b., para. 6). It is evident from the AGO’s website that the youth council has not only held art exhibitions on a yearly basis, for at least the past 10 years, but also “works collectively to initiate programming by youth for youth, including exhibitions, public art projects, large-scale events, field trips and much more” (AGO, n.d.a., para. 1). The AGO youth council purposefully creates a social environment for youth, where leadership roles encourage potential. The engaging activities provided by the AGO for members of their youth council allow adolescents to experience art from different perspectives and to have fun in the safe environment of the gallery. Members of the youth council can express their passion for the arts and for life through these activities at the AGO. The AGO youth council is “a hands-on, fast-paced program that gives participants a chance to work with local and international artists, advocates and activists, on projects that reflect the concerns, interests and passions of people between the ages of 14 to 24” (AGO, n.d.a., para. 1).

Another active youth council can be found in Kitchener, Ontario. The Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery (KWAG) is a public art gallery with youth as a focus of their community outreach. Their programs are teen friendly with an established youth council that “meets every other week throughout the school year to develop and facilitate new

Gallery programs” (KWAG, 2016, para. 1). Every other week youth come to the KWAG for 2 hours to be part of “contemporary art, participate in workshops and special events, meet like-minded peers [and] earn volunteer hours” (KWAG, 2016, para. 1). On its website, the KWAG indicates that it sponsors the youth council and does not require a membership fee. It also provides youth council members with snacks for their gatherings. The youth council website does not convey the age of the youth who are welcome to join the council.

There are many examples of youth councils in art galleries and art museums across Canada and the United States. In some cases they are organized for regions and in others for large urban centres. Some galleries encourage universal membership while others offer intense but limited programs such as The Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) located in Boston, Massachusetts. This institute has a sizeable teen-oriented program organized as the *ICA Teens*. One of many streams of the *ICA Teens* is the Teen Arts Council (TAC) that annually accepts “fifteen diverse high school students who share a common interest in contemporary art and community engagement” (ICA Teen Arts Council, 2016, para. 1). The TAC is filled yearly as the program is free; furthermore, each individual receives a monthly stipend. The TAC website includes information about who can apply, how to get involved, and who to contact if interested in participating in this organization. On the TAC website, they explain their goal as follows: “our primary objective is to supply Boston’s youth with the tools to voice themselves in the world of contemporary art” (ICA Teen Arts Council, 2016, para. 1). The TAC is open to any kind of artistic form—visual artists, poets, writers, musicians, dancers, filmmakers, or just art enthusiasts who want to be more engaged in museums and galleries.

The examples provided are just a few of many that were researched. They illustrate a sample of the approaches, degree of commitment, and longevity of youth councils in art galleries and museums. The one most compatible in terms of size, geography, demographics, and possibilities is the KWAG. If this region in Ontario can sponsor an active youth council in its gallery, it is equally possible to do so in the Niagara Region.

Arts Learning in a Non-School Environment

For the purposes of this paper, arts learning in a *non-school environment* is defined as education in the arts that is not occurring in secondary schools as a part of the established Ontario school curriculum. Arts education that happens within a secondary school setting follows a specific set of curricular expectations. Out-of-school arts education does not follow the same strict curricular planning, but rather is inspired by a more democratic decision-making in its formulation. This democratic decision-making is achieved by the youth council through exploration, investigation, guidance from adults, and, finally, consensus. Arts learning in a non-school environment such as a youth council is about youth deciding for youth and with youth about topics of value.

The websites of the Niagara Region's five largest art galleries or art museums—Niagara Falls Art Gallery, Rodman Hall Art Centre, RiverBrink Art Museum, Grimsby Public Art Gallery, and the Arts Place Gallery—show that available programming for primary schools is effective (see Table 1). According to the website information for the Rodman Hall Art Centre, in St. Catharines, Ontario, art classes, camps, and workshops are set up as programs that require payment and are only geared towards students between the ages of 6 to 10 (Brock University, 2010).

Table 1

Niagara Region Art Gallery/Museum Programming for Students

Art gallery or art museum	Programming for primary school students	Age	Payment	Programming for high school students	Age	Payment
Arts Place Gallery	Occasionally	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grimsby Public Art Gallery	Exhibitions, lectures, tours, hands-on learning	n/a	yes	Exhibitions, lectures, tours, hands on learning	n/a	yes
Niagara Falls Art Gallery	Art classes, camps, in school programming	4-14	yes	Evening art classes, portfolio building	High school students	yes
RiverBrink Art Museum	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Rodman Hall Art Centre	Art classes, camps, workshops	6-10	yes	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note. Data derived from listed art gallery/museums respective websites.

Primary school students get the support of the Niagara Falls Art Gallery with local school visits, at the request of teachers, to support their in-school curriculum. Programming for the high school students is also available on site. The partnerships between the galleries and elementary schools are in place; however, the partnerships between local art galleries or art museums are not well established with secondary schools. As a result, the secondary schools in the area do not experience the same degree of involvement, which is unfortunate for both the organizations and the adolescents (Niagara Falls Art Gallery, 2015). The GPAG provided some educational programs combined with its exhibitions, for both primary and secondary school students. However, the GPAG program is not free according to its website (GPAG, 2016). The RiverBrink Art Museum, located in the Niagara-on-the-Lake, is focusing on adult education through workshops. According to its website, there is not any evidence of programs for youth or children (RiverBrink Art Museum, 2016). The Arts Place Gallery was initially formed as a cooperative by 11 local artists; however, their workshop interaction is limited and sporadic (Arts Place Gallery, 2016).

In *The Role of Arts Education in Enhancing School Attractiveness: A Literature Review*, Bramford and Wimmer (2012) cite evidence from Eurydice on the arts and cultural education at schools in Europe that indicates “the focus on the arts diminishes as the child moves from primary to secondary school and they are relegated to the margins of the school curriculum and certain art forms are not taught at all” (p. 8). Galleries and their programs could help high school students experience a greater variety of art as they move from elementary to secondary education. However, according to their websites, art galleries or art museums in the Niagara Region are not targeting adolescents. While they

do try to include primary school children in their programming, efforts to partner with adolescents are inconsistent, limited, and attached to fees. The partnerships between adolescents and their local art galleries or art museums need to be consistent and connected in order to have long-term, positive effects for both youth and the community.

Out-of-school arts learning programs, such as youth councils, establish a “power with” type of relationship between adults and teens. In *Engaging Adolescents: Building Youth Participation in the Arts* (a study commissioned by the National Guild for Community Arts Education), Ellen Hirzy emphasizes the importance of sharing the power among adults and youth and not just the adults taking charge of the youth council’s program: “Power with” in youth councils provides the opportunity for youth to “become co-creators of programs that reflect their needs” (Hirzy, 2011, pp. 3-4).

Learning as a co-creator of the program offers a more sustainable and far-reaching learning and also enriches adolescents meaningful growth in the creation of art.

Teenagers involved in youth councils experience art on a holistic level, as “informal, out-of-school community arts education gives teens a chance to stretch their minds, bodies, and imaginations in a setting that is less obviously structured, programmatically more flexible, and conducive to more informal mentoring relationships with adults” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 3).

Such teens “actively participate as resources, problem solvers, and community builders, rather than simply being recipients of services” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 4). They are building relationships with adults and peers, collaborating in a different environment other than a school setting, and are taking charge of learning and thinking out of their comfort zone.

Youth Participation in a Non-School Environment

Why should adolescents be involved in art programs outside of the school environment in the first place? Hirzy (2011) provides a key answer to this question as she underscores the important combination of learning life skills and learning about the arts at the same time. Hirzy writes that “within this model, students gain skills that transfer to other parts of their lives through arts instruction that sets high expectations, encourages positive risks, and promotes leadership” (2011, p. 5). Adolescents are learning new or polishing existing collaborative skills as they have to work with others or the council, whether the others are peers or adults, such as artists, educational instructors or gallery staff. As well, being in a different environment, other than school, helps adolescents socialize with people from other neighbourhoods around the city. This form of socializing improves community building in the long run.

An important aspect of being involved in the arts is expressing oneself and this type of expression can often serve as a form of therapy. Youth councils provide this. Research shows that “in terms of non-academic outcomes, arts engagement most significantly predicted a sense of meaning and purpose” (Martin et al., 2013, p. 721). Expression through art can give goals and a value to one’s life as being part of the creative process and being a part of something bigger often does. On youth councils, “students engage more deeply in the arts because they are given real responsibilities that build on their inherent strengths” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 5). This gives young ambassadors of art considerable confidence and self-esteem. Through its many opportunities for learning in art, a youth council consequently “increases academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollment, as well as improves literacy and language abilities, communication

and performance skills, and cultural awareness” (Rosenbaum, 2013, para. 4).

Educational Policy

The conduction of a successful educational policy is a complex process that includes many stages including research, dissemination, review, and decision-making. Some may wonder why there is a need for an educational policy in a non-educational setting. The answer to this would be that while youth councils are a part of an art gallery or art museum, there are elements of education present, even if it is not formal schooling. Delaney’s (2002) *Educational Policy Studies: A Practical Approach* and Fowler’s (2013) *Policy Studies for Educational Leaders: An Introduction* provide the key information needed in policy formulation. Together with Hirzy’s (2011) study, these resources are the foundation for the handbook policy construction. A policy could be a guideline, framework, or a regulation that is formed on compromises achieved through collaboration between involved stakeholders and it is agreed upon by organization members, who then follow that policy (Delaney, 2002; Fowler, 2013). A policy is a formal document and establishes rules for the organization. There are positive consequences if that document is well written. A well-written policy, as Caldwell and Spinks note, facilitates “uniformity and consistency in decisions and in operational procedures” (as cited in Delaney, 2002, p. 15).

Writing an efficient educational policy depends on the awareness of the policy stages. The three policy stages are policy formulation, policy adoption, and policy update. When creating a policy it is important to be aware of the values and principles of the art gallery or art museum “as it is sometimes a challenge to see where values and principles fit in the overall [big] picture of educational policy making” (Delaney, 2002, p. 24). In

developing a policy for youth councils in an art gallery or museum, collaboration with adolescents is the key for their engagement and success of the policy. An obvious and critical aspect of youth councils is the need for committed adolescent participation in the non-school environment. If there are no teens to engage, there is no reason to have a youth council in an art gallery or art museum. The emphasis is on providing the many benefits of participation and meaningful motivation for life-long learning. Being aware of these aspects is crucial for successful policy development in the art gallery or art museum.

Summary of Literature Review

This study examined key details pertaining to youth councils in art galleries/museums based upon the latter's websites. Three art galleries in Southern Ontario and one in Boston, Massachusetts were used as sample constructions for the purposes of this paper. The art galleries have successful youth councils, producing exhibitions that contribute to the popularity of the art galleries, thereby collaborating with their communities and expanding the reach of their art culture.

The literature on arts learning in non-school environments discussed the many benefits of adolescent participation in community-sponsored groups in general and in youth councils specifically. Activities based in non-school environments such as community centres, art galleries, or art museums offer students the opportunities to participate in groups that enhance life and leadership skills and also support their learning in schools. As non-school environments they offer the advantage of real life connections.

CHAPTER THREE: JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CREATION OF A YOUTH COUNCIL HANDBOOK

The justification for the creation of a youth council handbook is divided into two sections: recognizing a need and sharing of my personal and educational background around youth councils. It is recommended that every art gallery or art museum has access to a youth council handbook in order to clearly establish and communicate the rules and regulations around its establishment.

Recognizing a Need for a Youth Council

The Niagara Region currently has five main public art galleries or art museums: Niagara Falls Art Gallery, Rodman Hall Arts Centre, RiverBrink Art Museum, Grimsby Public Art Gallery, and the Arts Place Gallery. The oldest of these, Rodman Hall Arts Centre, has served the Niagara Region for over 50 years. These institutions showcase local and national artists and some collaborate with elementary and secondary schools to support art education in the local school boards. Without a formal needs assessment, it is difficult to provide statistical evidence of the need for a youth council in any or all of these galleries. However, after many visits (both live and virtual) to each of the five galleries, I have discovered that there is little evidence of youth-based events and activities outside of prescheduled school visits facilitated by a teacher. The majority of patrons and participants to these art galleries or art museums are adults. This creates a serious gap in patronage that will affect the future of not only the art galleries but also the flourishing of visual arts in the Niagara Region. How can the visual arts remain vibrant if we do not start involving adolescents at a critical age to ensure that visual art and community involvement become part of a life-long routine? Community organizations

will always benefit from the participation of their local populations. In the case of youth councils, in art galleries or art museums, the benefits are mutual and provide adolescents with a positive outlet for tapped or untapped artistic potential.

Personal and Educational Background

My personal and educational background explained in this chapter has assisted in the development of the handbook. My methodology to do this involved several preliminary processes that began with personal experience and ended with collaboration on a visual plan with a graphic designer. The background of this paper is my previous education in the Fine Arts and my adolescent experience on youth councils. In Slovenia, my university undergraduate studies earned me a degree in Fine Arts Pedagogy. This program was a balanced study of drawing, painting, sculpture, art history, printmaking, and graphic design. These studio art components were complemented by studies in education theory. In Canada, at Brock University, my studies in the Master of Education – International Student Program focused on leadership and administration in education. The combination of these two programs gave me the confidence to create this MRP and key connections to resources and educational processes that are related to creating a handbook on how to establish a youth council in an art gallery or art museum. The structure of the handbook is organized around the principles of the educational policy cycle.

The policy cycle used in this MRP was developed in collaboration with my peers, under the guidance of Dr. Corrie Giles, the instructor of the EDUC 5P62 Politics, Power, and Policy in Education course. In addition to my personal experience and Master of Education studies, the bulk of the information on the handbook development process and

educational policy came from a combination of online and text-based sources. This knowledge was supported by websites that provided information on art galleries or art museums and youth councils. The research was limited to an English language search that focused on Canada, the United States, England, and Australia. I am aware, through personal experience, that there are many established youth councils in art galleries or art museums in Europe. However, time limitations and language barriers drove the decision to conduct this research in English. After examining numerous websites of galleries ranging from large urban centres to rural communities, I limited my study to Toronto's AGO, Boston's ICA, and the KWAG as models with already established youth councils.

Some information was retrieved from gallery literature; however, this information was limited as there are very few pamphlets with a focus on youth councils.

CHAPTER FOUR: CONSIDERATIONS IN DEVELOPING A HANDBOOK FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A YOUTH COUNCIL IN A LOCAL ART GALLERY OR ART MUSEUM

The next section of this research paper provides the recommended steps that an art gallery or art museum could take to establish a youth council. The steps are developed on the basis of a three-stage educational policy cycle encompassing policy formulation, policy adoption, and policy update. The first stage of policy formulation is to illustrate policy issue identification, prioritization, analysis, and development. The second stage, policy adoption, will be discussed through policy agreement, regulation, dissemination, interpretation, initiation, and implementation. The last stage of the policy cycle will reveal the importance of the youth council's evaluation and the necessary stages of review and revision (policy update). The stages of the policy cycle are a looped process, as all the stages connect to the continuous modification of the process. The stages do not have to occur sequentially. Some may be occurring simultaneously and this will facilitate the elements of time and participatory needs. This aspect of time should not be ignored. It is important to be aware at all times that every step in the process of policy making takes more time than the organization may have anticipated. Rushing through the process can lead to an unsuccessful, unsustainable program.

Why Does Your Local Art Gallery or Art Museum Need a Youth Council?

According to *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 and 10—The Arts*, the arts are an important aspect of a young person's education as "through participation in the arts, students can develop their creativity, learn about their own identity, and develop self-awareness, self-confidence, and a sense of well-being" (Ontario Ministry of Education

[OME], 2010, p. 3). Youth councils in local art galleries or art museums, extend this promise of intellectual, artistic and social development to students as they participate in community experiences. On an art gallery or art museum youth council, adolescent students are exposed to the possibilities identified by the OME and their participation in the arts as an extracurricular activity will “nourish the imagination and develop a sense of beauty, while providing unique ways for students to gain insights into the world around them” (OME, 2010, p. 3). Youth councils promote lifelong learning of art, specifically, and even lifelong learning in general. Through their artistic activities, adolescents will become engaged and be open to “a sense of wonder and joy when learning through the arts, which can motivate them to participate more fully in cultural life and in other educational opportunities” (OME, 2010, p. 3). The value of being a part of an organization outside of school is immeasurable as it helps youth experience something different from the school community and yet still meaningful for their bigger community.

When they establish youth councils, local art museums and art galleries will also be helping adolescents to develop skills necessary for living and learning in the 21st century. Youth art councils provide more than opportunities to create and produce art. They also focus on team work which requires teenagers to research, organize, contribute, participate, supervise, lead, and reflect upon. These actions are essential to the development of the interpersonal, intrapersonal and technological skills identified as necessary for success in learning in the 21st century—whether the learning is taking place in school, the workplace, or in life.

In their *New Pedagogies for Deep Learning*, Fullan and Scott (2014) present six

basic competencies needed for the 21st century:

- Character which is distinguished by perseverance, reliability, and adaptability
- Engaged citizenship and genuine interest in the world around them
- The ability to communicate in writing, orally, and digitally
- The ability to critically think, connect and construct meaning, and apply it in real world circumstances
- Collaborative skills to work interdependently on teams, manage themselves in team dynamics, and learn and contribute to the learning of their team mates
- Creativity coupled with an entrepreneurial spirit.

Youth councils provide opportunities to develop these 21st century competencies which will significantly prepare young people for success in the 21st century.

The *Glossary of Educational Reform* website provides a list of “the knowledge, skills, work habits, and character traits commonly associated with 21st century” (“21st Century Skills,” 2016, para. 1). The 13 points listed on the *Glossary of Educational Reform* website complement the expectations of the OME’s (2010) Arts curriculum and other educational research. In school and out of school art involvement promote almost all of these 13 skills explicitly:

- Critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, analysis, interpretation, synthesizing information
- Research skills and practices, interrogative questioning
- Creativity, artistry, curiosity, imagination, innovation, personal expression
- Perseverance, self-direction, planning, self-discipline, adaptability, initiative
- Oral and written communication, public speaking and presenting, listening

- Leadership, teamwork, collaboration, cooperation, facility in using virtual workspaces
- Information and communication technology (ICT) literacy, media and internet literacy, data interpretation and analysis, computer programming
- Civic, ethical, and social-justice literacy
- Economic and financial literacy, entrepreneurialism
- Global awareness, multicultural literacy, humanitarianism
- Scientific literacy and reasoning, the scientific method
- Environmental and conservation literacy, ecosystems understanding
- Health and wellness literacy, including nutrition, diet, exercise, and public health and safety. (“21st Century Skills,” 2016, para. 3)

Every one of us was once a teenager and knowing that “adolescents are neither old children nor young adults, but individuals with their own multifaceted developmental needs” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 14), art galleries or art museums can help youth mature and be more fulfilled individually. However, the art gallery or art museum must be conscious of adolescents’ developmental needs as they guide the design and development of the youth council program (Hirzy, 2011). According to Hirzy (2011), the key developmental tasks of youth between 13 and 18 years of age are: Forming an identity; Developing and mastering life skills; and Finding a sense of place (p. 14).

On a youth council, adolescents form their identity by thinking about different topics that are close to them as “artistic practices can help them think of themselves as viable contributors and agents of change, both within their programs and in their home communities” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 14). While building on their identity, youth

simultaneously can develop and master life skills. Collaboration with others from different environments enhances adolescent awareness of diversity. Being a part of a team with strong leadership can encourage youth to seek community involvement and to develop an “appreciation for positive social networks” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 14). If the youth council is a place where they feel safe and satisfied, adolescents will likely return. Hirzy (2011) highlights the importance of “finding a sense of place” (p. 14) for adolescents.

The development of 21st century skills are important to finding a sense of place in the adolescent years in order to prepare for life as an adult. Among these skills are creativity and collaboration. Educational research tells us that “youth has a remarkable capacity to imagine and experiment with new ideas and partnerships and take positive risks” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 15) and in youth councils that kind of behaviour is encouraged.

Equally important as the educational value of youth councils is the fact that the adolescents can have fun while participating in the many opportunities. The *fun factors* of youth councils can be rooted in a variety of activities from socializing, organized activities such as field trips, and, in the end, the positive anticipation and the joy of giving and sharing their own works of art. The handbook *Create a Youth Council in Your Local Community in 10 Easy Steps* offers four suggestions—the “Four F’s”—that focus on making the participation in the youth council more entertaining and appealing to youth: fun, friends, food, and freebies (Rural Youth Working Group [RYWG], 2008, pp. 30-31).

The Four F’s start with fun, which can be “adding in fun elements like team-building games and ice-breaking activities for new members which also encourages members to actually come back” (RYWG, 2008, p. 30). The importance of fun cannot be underestimated. The simple promises of food, the occasional freebie, and the value of

new friendships offer adolescents the opportunity to positively experience the importance of making connections in new settings.

When doing serious work and being engaged in the art gallery's or art museum's artistic activity, it is critical to "establish a collaborative environment where everyone is free to comment and voice their concerns" (RYWG, 2008, p. 30). The idea that youth councils are established for youth by youth means that the youth decide what will they talk about and create. This approach increases the chances that fun, in the sense of purposeful enjoyment, is possible. Members of the youth council should never feel like they are in school or being forced to listen to yet another lecture. They need to feel welcome and free to express their feeling and thoughts. Chabelyz Meija, an ICA Teen Arts Council Member Alum, shares how she feels about her youth council involvement:

Before I became part of the Teen Arts Council I felt like my life was all the same, the same people, same places, same ideas. Being part of the ICA has helped me expand who I am, and explore big ideas...new and different things that weren't part of my life before. When I hear people talk about art and museums as unimportant or insignificant, I want to tell them that they have it so wrong. It's one of the most important things that I know. (ICA Teen Arts Council, 2016, para. 3)

The second of the Four F's is about the friendships that can be generated from a completely different setting from the school or neighbourhood environment. Adolescents who join youth councils share the same interests in an out-of-school activity which can build the foundation for lasting friendships. Strong, healthy friendships rooted in positive, entertaining and gratifying activities can do more than keep individuals content. They can keep them grounded in a positive worldview. The RYWG (2008) mentions that youth councils, not necessarily in art galleries or art museums, but any kind of youth councils,

have the ability to indirectly reduce “youth crime in the community” (p. 30). The RYWG claims that having a better place to “hang out” helps some adolescents minimize the risks of getting into trouble. One young artist from Detroit’s Mosaic Youth Theater said: “Mosaic taught me how to really work hard at getting something I want. Knowing that you belong and knowing that people care forces you to want to do the best that you possibly can” (as cited in Hirzy, 2011, p. 47). Another young artist from the Mosaic group said: “I realized that the training that I received was not just about the arts, but about developing as a person” (as cited in Hirzy, 2011, p. 14).

The final two factors that may motivate adolescents on youth councils are food and freebies. Enjoying food and “breaking bread together” at break time can be a reward in itself for participants. The RYWG (2008) makes suggestions such as giving out pens, notepads or any products that do not cost much but would be appreciated by youth (p. 31). These freebies can also come from sponsors and other organizations who understand the many merits of youth councils.

Getting Everyone at the Institution on the Same Page

At this step of the policy formulation it is important to let the whole art gallery or art museum know about the plans, goals, and benefits of the youth council. An introductory, informational meeting inviting the ideas and participation of all staff and community partners will set a collegial tone and will be helpful in minimizing resistance or other potential conflicts. A youth council in an art gallery or art museum is going to bring the voices of adolescents into the already established adult leadership of an organization; that is why “it is important for all parties involved with the council to be fully supportive” (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 13). This step in establishing a youth council in an art gallery or art museum is relevant, because it investigates whether or not the art

gallery or art museum is “truly prepared to listen to young people and take action alongside them” (Youth Power, 2007, p. 1).

Organizations must endeavour to explain to all partners in the youth council the benefits of the youth council listed in the previous section of this chapter. Be prepared to answer many questions such as those suggested by GenerationOn (2012):

- What value will the youth council add to our organization?
- Are young people responsible enough to manage projects?
- Are youth capable of improving our programs? Aren't we doing enough already?
- How do we know that youth will be interested in serving our organization? (p. 14)

A primary purpose which could be advocated, no matter what the question is, can be found in the experiences of other youth councils. Those are the benefits that the art gallery or art museum will obtain. Hirzy (2011) reveals that “understanding what goes on during this pivotal period of individual development and building programs that promote adolescents’ assets will enable an organization to benefit from teens’ high levels of energy, creativity, and commitment” (p. 15).

Figure 1 illustrates the mutual flow of energy and benefits that art galleries or art museums have on youth and that youth return to the organizations. Angela Blackwell, the curator at the Thelma Hulbert Gallery in the UK, reflected that “having the group made a big difference both to the way young people see the gallery and how the gallery presents itself” (as cited in Rosso, 2010, p. 12). Blackwell’s own professional work was altered because of the young people’s views on the use of space in the gallery. Blackwell also remarked that “the public enjoyed seeing the young people’s work in relation to the main exhibitions” (as cited in Rosso, 2010, p. 12).

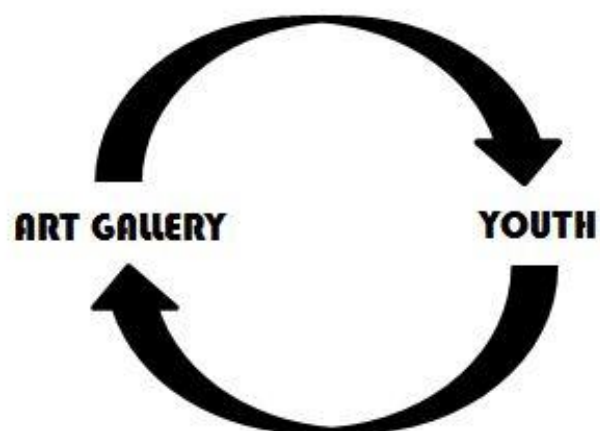


Figure 1. Reciprocal relationship between art galleries or art museums and youth.

Providing a Sustainable Future for Your Youth Council

A youth council should be planned with a long-term vision that assures its future. “Stable, long-term programs provide more consistent benefits for teens than episodic efforts” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 7). This is not only true for youth organizations but it is also true in the adult world. This is in part what the youth council hopes to achieve through a life-long commitment to learning and self-discovery that can translate into successful adulthood. Organizational commitment to a youth council involves a long-term investment of energy, time, and talent. The returns on the investment are manifold and, ultimately, enrich the lives of the participants and the recipients of the participants’ efforts. Over the long term, organizational commitment is sustained by internal support that facilitates opportunities as well as the interests and exploration of participants. This cannot happen if the organization is inconsistent, periodic, or sporadic. All partners in the youth council process need the certainty that they are not wasting time. When youth councils are organized around clear goals and expectations, they are more likely to have assured futures (Hirzy, 2011).

One of the important steps of establishing a sustainable youth council is brainstorming about its purpose and meaning and, consequently, its vision and mission statements. To achieve this important step: “clarity of purpose is especially important to capturing adolescents’ attention and earning their trust” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 19). Youth will be engaged deeper in the program if the program connects with their issues and interests. To further ensure sustainability, the RYWG (2008) advocates several suggestions that support future growth, including:

- Accurate and consistent funding

- Community networks
- Collegial and jovial atmosphere
- Regular meetings
- Rewards and recognition for contributors
- Long-term planning. (pp. 25-29)

Start-up funding is often short-term funding. Knowing this, youth councils need to pursue and secure continuous funding in order to make their council viable and sustainable. Start-up funding is a one-time infusion of funds that generally does not apply beyond the first year a council is running. In fact, it often does last beyond the first months. The purpose of start-up funding is to give an initializing boost to the funding process with the understanding youth council members will assume the responsibility for raising the rest of the necessary, operational funding. As the RYWG (2008) points out, “it is vital for a Youth Council to have ongoing or continuous funding to be able to effectively do all the things it wants to do within the community” (p. 25). It is suggested that youth councils employ the traditional methods of budget decision making that include cutting costs and avoiding lavish spending; adapting ideas to make the project fit the allocated budget; creating inventive fund raising events; and spending with the timelines of grants in mind.

Fostering relationships with patrons and potential audiences as well as building networks in the community will ensure the sustainability of a youth council. The more information known about the youth council in the art gallery or art museum and its initiatives, the more likely that you will receive financial and event support.

Relationships with the media—newspapers, local television, radio, and reputable Internet

sites—are the key to a strong community network as “media is a tremendously effective vehicle for this and can be employed to promote the mission of the Council and its various activities” (RYWG, 2008, p. 25).

Youth councils are about team work and what that team can accomplish. An inviting, collegial, and happy atmosphere goes a long way to keeping people committed. Participants should never feel frustrated or overwhelmed by other participants or events. Those who commit their time, interest, and energy need to experience success as well as challenge. Therefore, it is advised that informal but regular checks are conducted to ensure that the experience is worth its while. Positive energy from all adolescents on the council needs to flourish and leadership should be shared and not vested in one adolescent only (RYWG, 2008, p. 26).

Regular meetings keep the communication flow consistent and proactive. They allow for discussions, reports, and team unity. An active council keeps its members participating through shared meetings organized through a purposeful agenda. The long-term goals and long-term planning should always be agenda items, whether as updates or planning sessions.

Finally, in terms of youth council sustainability, recognition is a welcome celebration of achievement. While participation on the youth council is a reward in its own right, the appreciation and recognition of adolescents at this critical time of their personal development is always a good idea. Many organizations believe that “rewards are a fun way to recognize those who have contributed to the Council and also keep people engaged and motivated” (RYWG, 2008, p. 27). Rewards and recognition on youth council should be an extrinsic boost for intrinsic contributions.

Funding Sources

One of the crucial aspects of establishing a youth council in a local art gallery or art museum is funding. Funding for resources will facilitate several success strategies which will ensure that students are provided with more possibilities for exploration, investigation, and creation of art. Hirzy (2011) includes the program costs as one of the fundamental strategies of engagement. Paying the fees for membership might discourage teens from being a part of a youth council, “especially in economically disadvantaged areas” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 30). Adolescents should not be charged to be a part of a youth council. The methods of securing funding depend on the gallery’s capacity to establish a youth council. Depending on the size of the art gallery or art museum, it may happen “through small fundraising events, while a larger Council might need to look into obtaining local government support” (RYWG, 2008, p. 21).

The RYWG’s (2008) *Create a Youth Council in Your Community* handbook suggests that different organizations should have more than one funding source to secure themselves in anticipation of the unexpected end of the contribution sources. Youth councils exist in art galleries or art museums, which are private organizations whose responsibility is to find a funding source prior to youth council establishment in order to secure its sustainability. The gallery’s educator or an outreach coordinator can apply for grants in order to have a sufficient funding for materials, the honorarium for involved educators or artists, and other program expenses of the youth council. In Ontario, it is best to try to secure funding from the following sources: Ontario Arts Council (OAC); Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF); donations; and fundraising. The OAC’s (2014) *Vital Arts and Public Value* report available on its website describes the OAC’s vision, beliefs, priority groups, and values, as well as where pertinent information about OAC funding can be found.

*Table 2**Types of Funding for an Art Gallery or Art Museum*

Government support	Private sources	Fundraising
In Ontario: Ontario Arts Council and Trillium Foundation of Ontario	Private organizations and individuals that would like to donate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ticket sales for the final exhibition – Sales of projects products – Holiday centered special events

Note. Data derived from RYWG (2008); Martin, Pittman, Ferber, and McMahon (2007).

The OAC's (2014) *Vital Arts and Public Value: A Blueprint for 2014-2020*, it is clearly states that the OAC "has played an essential role in supporting the growth and success of the province's arts community" and "was founded with a mandate to foster the creation and production of art for the benefit of all Ontarians" (p. 1). The OAC website also provides clear instructions about the steps necessary to apply for a grant (OAC, n.d.). Art galleries or art museums can apply for these grants through the OAC as "OAC granting programs support arts disciplines, including craft, dance, literature, music, theatre, media arts and visual arts, as well as multidisciplinary arts" (OAC, 2014, p. 1).

Further into the OAC's (2014) *Vital Arts and Public Value* document, two themes and four goals to serve community and the public are presented as part of the strategic planning process. One of them is the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF). The OTF's website indicates that it is "one of Canada's largest granting foundations. With a budget of over \$136 million, OTF awards grants to some 1,000 projects every year to build healthy and vibrant Ontario communities" (2015, para. 1). However, retrieval of the instructions for the grant application process on the website is a challenge. Therefore, in order to pursue OTF grants, a little more creativity and mental leg work may be required.

Private businesses, individuals, or other organizations that are willing to donate money can do so. They are welcome-e to donate "small amounts of money to help with an activity... supplies... product or service donation for the purpose of fundraising..." (RYWG, 2008, p. 23). Donors usually want recognition or acknowledgement for their contributions and that is only fair considering their generosity and patronage. However, it is recommended that those interested in establishing a youth council "consider whether the values of the potential sponsor are in-line with that of the Council" (RYWG, 2008, p. 23).

When brainstorming fundraising for the art gallery or art museum, think about the innovative, special, and exciting approaches that differ from the usual ways of raising funds. It could be ticket sales for the final exhibition that the youth will hold at the end of the year or maybe the youth council could work on a project that could create a product for sale. During any holiday season, fundraising opportunities could be more plentiful based on holiday themes; however, make sure you do not imitate an idea used by another group or organization unless it is a proven or guaranteed method. Just because a fundraiser worked for a school community, sport organization, or a charitable group does not mean that it will be a success for you. Remember to look for fundraising items that are easy to organize and deliver, that have not saturated the community market and that supporters actually will find useful (RYWG, 2008, p. 22).

Fundraising is a competitive activity. There are many organizations in the community seeking support from a finite number of people. For this reason it is always best to fundraise through an organizational strength. Art galleries offer a perfect environment for auction or sales of the art made by youth and other items donated by community supporters. The fundraising itself can be a team-building practice for youth members as well as the way youth socialize while having fun. Fundraising can be the opportunity for youth to learn about managing complex tasks, managing funds, and gaining practical knowledge in marketing and sales (RYWG, 2008, p. 23).

Twenty-first century technology offers new avenues for large-scale communication and can be very helpful for fundraising. Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram offer an alternative means of attracting donors and securing funding (RYWG, 2008, p. 24). Communication technology can also be used to

keep donors and community partners up to date with the happenings on the youth council and, therefore, these communication technologies could make potential donators interested and informed about what is happening in the art gallery's youth council. (See, for example, the AGO Youth Council's Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/AGO-YOUTH-1676742425881800/>.)

The management of all donations and revenues should be well planned and is best administered as a co-responsibility. It is recommended that "there is an adult coordinator who sets up a bank account and keeps track of the budget" (RYWG, 2008, p. 24). However, it is also recommended that the adolescents be mentored in this responsibility through a collaborative process that teaches them the necessary skills while providing adult supervision for discussion and feedback (RYWG, 2008, p. 24). In the end, whatever your choice of funding opportunities or methods of communication, it is crucial to recognize and thank the sponsors and financial supporters of the youth council with "a thank you letter or a more creative and personalized recognition" (RYWG, 2008, p. 24).

About the Participants

Youth council adolescents are a specific type of group gathered because of their ages and interests. In order to establish an efficient and effective youth council "a diversity membership population is needed" (Youth Power, 2007, p. 4). In the literature about youth councils, there is more than one term used for description of the young people. GenerationOn (2012) suggests that "the word 'youth' generally refers to a time of life that is neither childhood nor adulthood, but rather somewhere in between" (p. 19) and Hirzy (2011) explains that "adolescence is a social construction as much as a stage of life, a classification invented by members of a particular culture or society and affected by

age, culture, race, gender, and class structures (p. 14). Hirzy (2011) determines adolescents as “youth between 13 and 18 years old” (p. 14), whereas GenerationOn (2012) recognizes different age spans as relevant for youth councils and suggests that when establishing a youth council “do not get bogged down by the ambiguity of “youth”—in this case, you get to define it yourself” (p. 19). For the purposes of a youth council in an art gallery or art museum, the targeted group of youth should include high school students and may include college or university students who want to be a part of any kind of visual art enterprise.

Generally, adolescence is a period of time in their lives where they have the physical, emotional, and mental stamina to participate in many activities at the same time. This is both an asset and a challenge for youth councils. Adults who are supervising need to develop an understanding of “what goes on during this pivotal period of individual development and building programs that promote adolescents’ assets...high levels of energy, creativity, and commitment” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 15). If the youth program accepts students older than 19, the age gap may create issues. However, since collaboration is key in the relationships on youth councils, the age difference can be used to uncover potential leaders in the future, because “younger youth can learn from older youth about how the council works” (RYWG, 2008, p. 8). As positive mentors and role models, youth of any age are welcome to be a part of the youth council.

Participatory Considerations for Youth Council

Many proponents of youth councils have established 12 as the optimum number for membership in an organization’s youth council. However, it can be better to recruit more adolescents as adolescents are always busy and they might not be able to commit to

all the youth council activities that have been organized (RYWG, 2008, p. 7). The youth council should gather at least once or twice per month. This will depend on the individual youth council dynamic, interest and resources. Diversity in the youth council “helps ensure a variety of viewpoints... and encourages creativity in discussions” (RYWG, 2008, p. 8). In her report, Rosso (2010) notes that in the organizations with youth forums, “the majority of participants are female while male participation is lower” (p. 9). Hence, the goal is to enroll youth from different socio-economic conditions, faiths, gender, sexual orientation, race and family structures (RYWG, 2008).

Participation Obstacles

In *Engaging Adolescents: Building Youth Participation in the Arts*, Hirzy (2011) discusses the issues that may occur while establishing a youth program in an organization:

Barriers of the mind are less visible but not less important to understand. Some teens may believe that the arts are only for certain people, so you will need to bridge the racial, cultural, and economic divides that create this barrier. Others may feel that they aren't creative, can't make art, or won't be able to learn choreography or perform for an audience. Still, others may perceive an organization or program as just another place where adults will tell them what to do and expect them to adapt to a prescribed role. (p. 29)

Hirzy is addressing the very real and common challenges of confidence building and dispelling self-consciousness that arise when working with adolescents.

The challenge of confidence building in teens is not the only obstacle or issue that may present itself. Any new process that is undertaken brings with it challenges and barriers that need to be met, adapted to, or in some cases overcome. Some of these issues

or barriers can be easily solved by collaborative problem-solving. Several major youth councils have identified some of the common barriers as location, access, atmosphere, safety, time, ethnic diversity, and program costs.

One of the first issues can be the location of the meetings. It is important to ensure that the location provides access for all potential participants, especially those who have specific needs in terms of mobility. Choosing a location other than the art gallery or art museum may be necessary.

A second issue that may arise in the choice of location is its convenience and access. The youth council should meet at a location served by public transportation that is frequent and/or provides convenient, free parking.

A third issue that may affect the success of the location is the atmosphere or tone that the actual place offers. After establishing safety as a priority, it is recommended that the atmosphere not be too fancy or intimidating. Comfort is the key.

Time issues may include family responsibilities and other commitments such as school, part-time jobs and other community commitments. While there will rarely be a perfect time to meet, there will be a best time that is determined through collaborative decision-making. Time issues may also arise depending on the season or time in the yearly calendar. Consider how holidays may affect your scheduling.

Safety is a major concern for adolescents and their parents. It is essential that a parent education session be offered to help them support and encourage the participation of their children. This session will go a long way in reassuring them of both the value and the benefits of the council.

Ethnic diversity should be celebrated but it may bring special issues like fluency

in communication. It is important that all adolescents have the opportunity to participate, so the languages and dialects spoken in a community may affect the volunteer choices you make.

Program costs will have a direct effect on who can participate. Solutions can be found in strategies that nullify costs, offer economic assistance and sponsorship that offsets cost.

These are not the only issues that may arise; however, any other challenges and problems can be successfully met through committed and collaborative problem-solving. Your options may require adaptation or even elimination of ideas but new ideas can be substituted. Awareness of the possible issues is the first step to successfully establishing a youth council in an art gallery or art museum.

Roles and Responsibilities on the Youth Council

There are different ways to categorize the roles and responsibilities of participants on a youth council. The categories are divided into the roles of adults, the roles of adolescents and the interaction between the two.

Staff Support

While the youth council in an art gallery or art museum is designed primarily for the purpose of engaging youth, the roles and responsibilities of adults are critical to ensuring a successful and sustainable launch of a youth council. Roles for adults can vary from advisor to facilitator to coordinator or subject-matter expert. Whatever the role, the adult associated with it must use a two-tiered approach. One will involve mentoring and the other will involve supervision of the mentored skill. Adults do not have to be involved in all aspects of a youth council but in those roles and responsibilities that

require expertise, sensitivity, safety and regulation, adult involvement must be constant to ensure the trust of the adolescents, their parents and guardians, the organization's staff, and the community partners (RYWG, 2008, p. 15).

Values That Shape Adult–Adolescent Interactions on Youth Councils

In order for adults to be effective in their involvement and communication with young people, several key attitudes need to shape the cultural environment of the youth council. The value of young people's involvement should be authentically respected as a viable source of knowledge and action. With this value in mind, the adolescent level of involvement should be clearly identified and organized in order to have a shared and clear understanding of their relationship to the decision-making process, and the rules and regulations; "all too often, youth appear to be offered power, but then find themselves with very little, as negotiation and decision-making takes place behind the scenes" (RYWG, 2008, p. 15).

Related to the value of respecting youth are the values of authenticity and partnership. Mutual goals, a shared mission and united vision are keys to establishing a working relationship that doesn't involve youth in a token capacity. Adolescents on an effective youth council are never included just so that the organization gives the appearance of being, as the RYWG (2008) frames it, "youth friendly" (p. 15). If a youth council only has the appearance of adolescent participation and leadership then "bitterness and frustration can easily develop if youth do not get a chance to actually contribute their skills and opinions" (RYWG, 2008, p. 15). There is a sensitivity required when dealing with the differences between helping students learn and thrive in roles and responsibilities and forcing them to take on adult roles. Therefore, attention must be paid

to creating equal and real opportunities for adolescents to work from their strengths and to grow from their challenges.

It is the responsibility of the adults on the youth council to ensure that “policies and standards for youth should be provided, evaluated and continuously improved as youth involvement and requirements change” (RYWG, 2008, p. 15). The short-term goal is to assure effectiveness in engagement and successful programs and learning opportunities. The long-term goal is to encourage adolescent participants to keep returning to the youth council as adult mentors. Through review and revision of policies and standards and with the authentic collaboration of adolescents, the adults on the youth council can ensure that the youth council is a significant contributor to the community. This can only happen when adults and adolescents on the youth council share the same basic values of respect, authenticity, trust and partnership.

Pre-Establishing a Youth Advisory Team for the Youth Council

Pre-establishing a youth advisory team for a youth council will probably require the creation of an advisory team, comprised of two to three adolescents, who can assist the adults in the art gallery or art museum, with strategizing the steps of youth council establishment. This advisory group will be “the core of the community you hope to build for adolescents and the starting point for your engagement effort” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 33). The purpose of the advisory team on the youth council is to “increase communication and collaboration between youth and adults” (Youth Power, 2007, p. 4). As well, the advisory team may “participate in program design, branding and messaging, marketing and recruitment, evaluation” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 33) before the actual first meeting of the youth council. Adult supervisors should invite teens “who are respected by their peers and

enthusiastic” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 33) to form the advisory team.

In the months prior to forming the youth council, it is suggested that an advisory team is intentionally created before the youth council itself. It is suggested that this team be established through “focused interviews and survey groups” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 33). Once the advisory team has been formed, team members can begin the work of designing a pre-program and branding the message of the youth council. These efforts will initiate the youth council process more quickly as they will provide the information needed for effective recruitment to the youth council. In branding and messaging, the advisory team can help with establishing a logo of the youth council and the message that accompanies it. As the calendar year moves forward, the adolescents on the advisory team will continue to work in an advisory capacity but will also take on other team roles on the youth council.

Also, the advisory team can help in marketing and recruitment strategies because “they’re enthusiastic about your teen programs, knowledgeable about the teen market, and in touch with their peer group” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 45). In the evaluation process, a youth advisory group will be presented with the opportunity to evaluate and gather feedback from the youth perspective. They will be critically engaged in “reviewing, writing, and designing marketing materials, building marketing list from their high schools, making personal contacts, and tweeting about their experience in your teen programs” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 45).

Designing a Program for Teens With Teens

Designing an actual youth council program starts from the moment reasons and benefits of the youth council in your gallery are envisaged. What should drive the program design is the “knowledge of the key tasks of adolescent development” (Hirzy,

2011, p. 36). Hirzy (2011) also suggests that art gallery or art museum staff should seek consultations with teachers and other experts that will enrich the process, because professionals in other adolescent centered occupations such as a “professionally trained counselor or social worker can help you with this aspect of program design, as well as provide support to you and your students as the program develops” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 36).

However, Hirzy (2011) reports that “high school students especially value opportunities to make their own choices, take initiative, and practice leadership skills and they need something to work toward, incentives to get there, and rewards along the way (p. 36). As long as the program includes the participants in the design and establishment processes of the youth council, the youth council in your art gallery or art museum will have the opportunity to achieve positive outcomes. This is because youth “respond well to programs that have positive personal as well as artistic outcomes” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 36). Following the key principle of youth involvement in the program design, Hirzy lists five other design principles to follow for an effective program:

- Simplicity can be as effective as complexity.
- Measurable outcomes must be designed with the needs of the teen audience in mind.
- Learning should be collaborative and youth-centered.
- Newer and traditional forms of media should be balanced with emerging technologies.
- Positive risk taking is encouraged. (p. 36)

The secret to maintaining a simple program design, which is at the same time effective, is in the consideration of the size of the youth council and age range of the participants. Rosso’s (2010) findings about the characteristics of researched youth

council programs show that, on average, they have been running from 3 to 8 years. They usually involve more than 35 young people, mostly between 16 and 17 years of age.

Rosso found that “there are a higher proportion of female participants (58%) than male (40%) ... [and] most of the participants take part in activities on a voluntary basis (81%)” (2010, p. 5). As well as the size of the youth council and the age range of the participants, the RYWG (2008) suggests considering the “commitment timeframe of participants, frequency and duration of meetings... activities required of youth council members” (p. 14). Keeping the numbers, age, and commitments of the participants manageable will facilitate the management of the event calendar. When these numbers become too large, setting up “a calendar of potential times when your members can spearhead individual projects with the support and guidance of your organization” (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 53) becomes increasingly difficult.

The first step in defining and measuring outcomes tailored for teens is a needs assessment that lets you know where the students are in terms of knowledge, experience and ability. Following the needs assessment, which can be done formally or informally, create a series of statements that address intrapersonal, interpersonal, communication, community and artistic development. Sample statements are listed below:

- Students will enhance existing and develop new artistic skills (artistic).
- Students will develop creative and critical thinking to aid in the creation process (artistic).
- Students will practice leadership and decision-making abilities (interpersonal, intrapersonal and communication).

- Students will feel support from adults and peers in personal and group work (intrapersonal).
 - Students will feel empowered in positive risk taking (artistic).
 - Students will build strong relationships with community members (community).
- (Hirzy, 2011, p. 37)

The program design of the youth council should be focused on collaboration and “youth-centered learning” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 38). Hirzy (2011) also suggests that this can happen by building a program with various formats and opportunities that require the participants “to create, reflect, discuss, revise, and present activities” (p. 37). The collaboration aspect happens when the youth council participants share in ideas and decision making, thus giving them a sense of “ownership over the planning process” (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 53). Youth-centered learning is extended when leadership and group decisions making opportunities are presented. These may include activities such as developing the website, hosting youth council exhibitions, recruiting, fund raising and many other activities that require participants to develop and act on the development (Hirzy, 2011, p. 38).

Media and technology are unavoidable partners to any aspect of today’s youth activities; therefore, it is obvious that technology can help with youth engagement for learning purposes. Hirzy (2011) suggests to “invite your youth advisory council to recommend effective integration of technology and the best use of social media for—marketing, communication, and sharing the creative product” (p. 38) and also recommends the “use [of] YouTube to share performance videos, a Flickr group to document teen programs, and texting, Twitter, and Facebook for marketing” (p. 38). As

we know, technology is more than social media and can be used for creative and marketing purposes; it is also a tool for functional and quick communication between staff and youth and also for meetings, which “include an overhead projector or SMART board, photo or website editing software, a computer camera and microphone for telephone or Skype meetings, and digital cameras to document projects and activities” (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 41). However, all of these technologies will affect your budget and therefore should be considered seriously when dealing with the youth council finance plan.

If the adults overseeing the youth council prepare in advance about how to encourage “positive risks” (Hirzy, 2011, p 38) in youth council members, then the fear and insecurity factors would be easier to cope with. Risk-taking can be a growth opportunity not only for the teenagers but also for the adults. Hirzy (2011) explains that “artistic and individual benefits from the holistic youth engagement approach accrue over time through a process of artistic, individual, and social development” (p. 38). This cannot happen without encouraging teenagers to explore challenge, envision and dare, even if the possibility failure is possible. Failure brings with it many powerful life lessons and skill development opportunities. With adult mentorship, risk-taking is less about failure and more about accepting challenges.

Program design, together with the creation of the vision statement, mission statement and setting the goals should be established through the final meeting in the art gallery or art museum, with all stakeholders and associates present. Hirzy (2011) suggests that teen members of another youth council be present at the meeting to share ideas, positive and negative aspects of an already established youth council; “even before getting the youth ‘in the door,’ programs invite prospective students to participate in

focus groups and individual interviews that inform program design” (p. 4).

Designing a program for the youth council is a shared adult and adolescent responsibility.

Both groups need to bring “genuine motivation and desire to engage in real and meaningful dialogue” (Rosso, 2010, p. 6). However, it is the art educators in the art gallery or art museum who can raise the chances of success for this program by their genuine desire to dialogue with youth and to share space within their organization.

Through the efforts of art educators to “create conditions that enable adolescents to see themselves as viable shapers of their lives and communities” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 15), an effective program that retains participants will flourish.

Vision and Mission Statement

Over the last several decades, organizations have chosen to focus or refocus their organizations around the concept of a mission statement. A powerful mission statement publicly reveals the current purposes and intentions of the organization. It conveys how the organization sees itself especially in the areas of ethics, goals, culture, and organizational norms. Mission statements should reflect three basic ideas: what the organization can offer clients and patrons, what it offers its members, and what it can offer those in charge. Lately, organizations have come to include what they can offer the community and what they can offer the world. A strong mission statement is concise, striking, and unambiguous. The average length of a mission statement is 10 to 12 words.

While a mission statement communicates the organization’s current beliefs, the vision statement communicates what the organization aspires to be in the future. A vision statement sets the direction for growth and provides the guidelines to achieve it. Vision statements are formal and included in the organization’s official documents such as

policies and procedures. There are fewer recommendations regarding the development or specific requirements of the vision statement. They can be one sentence or several pages; however, the characteristics of an effective vision statement are: concise, clear, future-oriented, challenging, inclusive, and inspiring.

A youth council may choose to develop both a mission statement and a vision statement. The first will address what they plan to do throughout the year while the second will speak to their long-term aspirations as an organization. Both the mission statement and the vision statement will provide the adolescents and the adults of the youth council with a shared purpose and a united vision.

Setting Goals

Setting the goals for a youth council in an art gallery or art museum is a very important step as goals can vary depending on the youth council's capacity, drive, and environment. It is always best to set challenging goals rather than effortless goals. This is recommended because challenging artistic standards will create more action and events for the youth council. Youth councils must ensure that "both the process of learning and creating and the artistic product are of high quality" (Hirzy, 2011, p. 37). However, GenerationOn (2012) adds another dimension to setting goals, focused on the concept of the long term. Long-term goals provide vision and direction for short-term projects and sustain concepts of shared vision and common goals (GenerationOn, 2012). Since every youth council should be created and organized for youth by youth, Hirzy (2011) suggests that program design for the adolescents' goal setting process "follows familiar principles: agree on purpose, match approach and content to the target audience, define outcomes and impact, and assess effectiveness" (p. 36). Youth must be a part of setting the goals

and recording the goals statement because “the goal outlines the big picture as to why the Youth Council comes together and to what end it dedicates its time and effort” (RYWG, 2008, p. 16). When adolescents participate in goal setting, they establish a key connection to the process and a sense of authentic ownership to any projects. Adults and adolescents setting the goals collaboratively establish a relationship based on respect and sharing.

Potential Activities and Projects for the Youth Council

Once the goals of the youth council are set, it is necessary to develop long-term and short-term plans for the possible activities that will be happening in the youth council. As previously mentioned, it is crucial to include the youth participants in formatting the activities since this is the main purpose of the youth council. Rosso (2010) writes that

There is no single approach and no agreed definition of what youth-led activities entail. Organizations experiment with different formats and encourage young people to be decision makers. Young people’s roles range from forum members and young curators to ambassadors and guides. (p. 5)

However, the big picture of the activities has to be clear and “always directly related to the objectives outlined in the goal statement” (RYWG, 2008, p. 17).

A significant part of designing a youth council program in your local art gallery or art museum is building on projects that could potentially happen in the future. First, the RYWG (2008) suggests to hold a meeting with all the stakeholders important to the youth council, including the adolescents involved, to roughly set the activities for the future. For the first youth council in your art gallery or art museum include the youth advisory team to represent the whole group of young people on the council. Later on, all of the

youth council can be involved in the meeting to “brainstorm all possible activities and to narrow [them] to something manageable based on the amount of time members have to volunteer” (RYWG, 2008, p. 17). There will probably be a variety of suggestions coming from your particular youth; nonetheless, the research shows that

the most popular types of activities that are regularly offered...[are] planning exhibitions/installations; planning and developing events on festivals; developing websites or media programmes; working with an artist, historian, or curator on a project; taking part in workshops; supporting marketing campaigns. (Rosso, 2010, p. 11)

The types of activities for the program can be discussed at the meeting in greater detail. One of the first projects could focus on something that they are familiar with such as considering how to use technology (e.g., a cell phone or a tablet) in a way it has never been used before. Hirzy (2011) reports that “a national survey of 8- to 18-year olds by the Kaiser Family Foundation found that the amount of time they spend online with entertainment media has risen dramatically, to an average 7 hours and 38 minutes a day” (p. 18). While creating the plan for the projects, consider that “teens themselves will be key partners in deciding how, when, and how much to integrate social and entertainment media into programming, marketing, and overall engagement” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 18). Adolescents are currently living at a time where the word *device* has become a way of life, so any youth council program “must take into account teens’ preferences and affinity for cell and online interaction” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 18). The following lists present projects of the youth councils at the AGO and The Power Plant, respectively. Examples of AGO youth council projects (which are described in greater detail at <http://www.ago.net/youth-council-archive>) include:

- Singing Softly When No One's Around
- Fear
- Agency
- The Cause
- InTENse

Examples of The Power Plant's Power Youth projects (which also are detail on the gallery's website at <http://thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents/Programs/Power-Youth.aspx>) include:

- Radiant City
- Propel
- In Our shoes
- Building the Block
- Silkscreen Power Up!
- Building Beyond: Legacy 3015

Once the youth council advisory team has completed the start-up phase, it is time to consider how to attract more young people to the youth council and how to keep them attending.

Recruitment and Marketing Strategies

One of the first steps towards recruiting new members for a youth council in an art gallery or art museum is visiting the local high schools. High school students who are interested in art could be recruited by “getting school administrators, counselors, and teachers involved, [which] will ensure that students receive detailed information about the council as well as instructions on how to apply” (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 22).

GenerationOn (2012) explains that “in addition, school employees may be able to identify students who they think would be good candidates for your council” (p. 22), especially those artistically inclined. In some cases “you may also be able to set up an assembly or an information session at a school” (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 22). The benefit of recruiting high school students through their schools is that parents and school administrators trust the vetting system that ensures that the organization has met the strict safe school standards that must be met by all who partner with schools.

In the Niagara Region there is an English Public and an English Catholic school board as well as a French Public and a French Catholic school board. These are: District School Board of Niagara; Niagara Catholic District School Board; Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud; and Conseil scolaire Viamonde. Tables 3 to 7 provide the anticipated distance from Niagara Region secondary schools to the four major art galleries or art museums in Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Niagara-on-the-Lake, and Grimsby. Secondary schools in Niagara Falls have the advantage of having easy access to the Niagara Falls Art Gallery, as do St. Catharines secondary schools to Rodman Hall Arts Centre. Students have the option of organized busing or the local transit system. Secondary students in Grimsby also have this option with the Grimsby Public Art Gallery but students from Beamsville District Secondary School only have the option of organized busing. The RiverBrink Art Museum, located in Niagara-on-the-Lake, can only be accessed through organized busing. Secondary students from the southern sections of the school board, including schools in Port Colborne and Welland, have one art gallery to partner with; however it is located in Port Colborne and secondary students from Welland high schools will need organized busing. The programming at the Art Gallery of Welland exists in limited capacity.

Table 3

*Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—District
School Board of Niagara (DSBN)*

DSBN school	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
A N Myer Secondary School	9.1	17.1	9.4	40.9	33.6
Beamsville District Secondary School	41.8	20.3	41.1	8.8	45.6
Centennial Secondary School	19.3	18.8	35.6	47.4	13.8
DSBN Academy	21.8	1.7	20.1	30.5	30.8
E L Crossley Secondary School	23.5	16.3	33.5	33.4	22.4
Eastdale Secondary School	15.4	22.4	35.3	49.3	14
Eden High School	22.1	5.4	19.6	26.3	38.4
Fort Erie Secondary School	26	47.2	43.4	70.7	30.9
Governor Simcoe Secondary School	22.1	7	19.6	28.8	38.7
Grimsby Secondary School	47.5	31.3	46.8	1.4	54.9
Laura Secord Secondary School	20	4.8	17.5	28.5	36.5
Port Colborne High School	26.6	36.5	46.6	57.5	1.4
Lifetime Learning Centre Secondary School	22.1	5.4	19.6	26.3	38.4
Ridgeway-Crystal Beach High School	22.4	43.3	41.5	67.2	17.6
Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School	19.5	4.6	19.2	31.7	31.7
South Lincoln High School	64.7	30	54.3	14.3	41.5
St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and Vocational School	20.2	2.9	17.7	27.2	35
Stamford Collegiate	5.6	19.4	12.6	43.2	31.7
Thorold Secondary School	15.5	7.4	16.9	34.5	31.2
Westlane Secondary School	5.1	17.4	16	43.3	27.4

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Table 4

Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB)

NCDSB school	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School	48.2	41.9	47.5	2.1	55.9
Denis Morris Catholic High School	20.3	3.5	19.6	31.2	30.3
Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School	21.5	7.2	19	30.8	38.9
Lakeshore Catholic High School	25	34.9	43.3	57.3	1.8
Notre Dame College School	18.2	19.8	35.7	48.7	13.7
Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School	22.4	5.6	19.9	26.5	38.6
Saint Michael Catholic High School	3.7	19.1	18.7	45.9	24.9
Saint Paul Catholic High School	7.7	16.7	11.1	40.5	32.7

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Table 5

Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud (CSDCC-S)

CSDCC-S school	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
École Secondaire Catholique Jean-Vanier	19.8	19.6	32.7	64.6	15.6

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Table 6

Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—Conseil scolaire Viamonde (CSV)

CSV school	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
École Secondaire Confédération	15.3	22.3	36.2	49.2	14.6

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Table 7

Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—Private Schools in Niagara Region

Private school in Niagara Region	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
Beacon Christian School	22.8	5.1	19.7	27.2	36.6
Niagara Christian Collegiate	20.1	40.9	38.1	64.8	28.5
Ridley College	23.1	1.3	19.6	29.6	35.8
Royal Elite International Academy	22.8	16.7	11.1	41.5	44.8

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Tables 3 to 7 are also intended to provide art gallery education officers and educational partners in the community with an understanding of the municipalities that are most likely to be recruited from youth councils in relation to their local art galleries or art museums. There are also several private/independent schools in Niagara that are organized under a variety of faiths, such as Christian Reformed and Anglican. These include Beacon Christian School, Niagara Christian Collegiate, Ridley College, and Royal Elite International Academy.

Another way of recruiting participants is through the traditional marketing method of “word of mouth,” as described by Angela Blackwell, the curator of the Thelma Hulbert Gallery in Devon: “it took some time to set up the group but eventually it took off through word of mouth and by enabling young people to have a say in the alteration plans for the gallery” (as cited in Rosso, 2010, p. 12). Hirzy (2011) also indicated that recruiting members can happen more quickly or more easily when adults enlist the help of youth. She remarked “organizations that run successful programs for adolescents stress peer-to-peer recruitment as the central strategy” (p. 44). Adolescents are highly influenced by their friends’ opinions and actions as part of their search for social acceptance. Since adolescence is generally a very social time for most teens, appealing to units or clusters of friends is more likely to garner a greater number of participants than the “one on one” approach which has its own recruitment merits. Teens “are attracted to programs and activities that their peers perceive as social, creative, and educational, so that is the image you should project” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 44) as an organization. Students are your strongest advocates when they know that what is happening is worthwhile.

Art galleries and art museums have their own databases, guest books, email contacts, and contact lists of patrons. These are always useful for recruitment of youth and

marketing of the youth council itself. Requests or calls for participation to partners, patrons, and the community can be made through these and other local media such as local cable companies and their programming opportunities, local radio stations, and newspapers. For example, The Source, a local cable program in the Niagara Region, is always looking for good news stories to showcase local organizations and events and it offers both free advertisement and a wider audience.

Recruiting and engagement strategies for youth council programs must take into account teens' preferences and their fascination and reliance on technology, media, and online interaction. "Teens themselves will be key partners in deciding how, when, and how much to integrate social and entertainment media into programming, marketing, and overall engagement" (Hirzy, 2011, p. 18). The sooner adolescents are involved in recruiting and marketing, the sooner wider options of strategies become available to adult organizers. Adolescents will bring a contemporary flow of ideas that will undoubtedly include such recruitment and marketing strategies as promoting on social media such as Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, email, Pinterest, and whatever innovative media communication comes into popular usage over the next several years.

After the initial recruitment stage, future recruitment will require a clearly established pattern that potential participants and community partners can anticipate with regularity. For example, the AGO "accepts new members every fall, and applicants are selected after a group interview involving current members of the AGO Youth Council" (AGO, 2016, para. 1). Those applicants commit for a year to be a part of the youth council. There is a recruitment team that assigns a scout, who goes around to the schools and recruits interested students, maintains contact through email, updates the database, contacts the Board Office staff, and more. It is important for effective recruitment that the processes

and the representatives of the art gallery or art museum are as constant and consistent as possible over the years. This ensures a familiar presence in the community that establishes comfort, trust and a strong working relationship.

As previously mentioned, “the recruitment of the dedicated youth members is the most critical factor to the success of a Youth Council” (RYWG, 2008, p. 7). Once the recruitment strategies have been organized and are set for implementation, it is essential to set a compelling tone that addresses sincerity, values, and respect for all potential partners. Let adolescents know how they will benefit from your organization and how the organization will benefit from having them around and also make sure to “have participants brainstorm the benefits and then make sure others know about them” (RYWG, 2008, p. 8). The seriousness of your intent will also be emphasized when you meet them prepared with an application form that is immediately available in hard copy and available online.

The application form for recruitment should include applicants’ personal information, such as their emergency contact, personal interests, past experience and future plans, as well as explicit agreement and the signature of the applicant as well as their guardian in the case of underage students. Also, provide an email contact on the website of your art gallery or art museum, for any further questions or information the future youth council members might have. Appendix A includes an example of an application form for a youth council in an art gallery or art museum.

Evaluation of the Youth Council’s Program

The youth council in an art gallery or art museum is an organization under the advocacy and supervision of a larger organization, which is also part of the greater organization of the community. These connections between governing bodies must be reviewed, evaluated, and revised with regularity. To use a metaphor, the youth council is

like a part of the body. In the same way a person needs annual check-ups, so does the youth council in order to keep all parts working and, like the human body, the youth council needs both self-examination and examination by those with expertise. The processes of self-examination and outside evaluation can be a blend of formal and informal approaches. A formal evaluation can happen at the end of a year and informal evaluation can happen mid-year or as required after a major event. Evaluation and revision is “essential to keep teen programs relevant and effective and [to] retain students” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 46).

The RYWG (2008) also suggests that “keeping track of Youth Council activities and progress is a key ingredient to its overall success; it’s a way for people to learn and for the Council to flourish” (p. 32). There are many reasons to evaluate the youth council and the majority of them fall into one of these five areas:

- Celebrating successes
- Investigating improvements
- Building a case for funding
- Communicating to and with the community to demonstrate successes,
- Promoting the Youth Council and fostering relationships. (RYWG, 2008, p. 32)

The five areas listed above provide the purposes and value of self-examination for youth councils. There is also value in examination and evaluation from the perspective of groups partnered with the youth council. These can be arranged through something as simple as a short survey or something as complicated as participating in a study. The survey offers outside feedback but volunteering to participate in a study has far reaching impact. Not all youth councils will have this opportunity; however, if the youth council is

an effective one, the review and evaluation can boost its reputation. This was the case for Detroit's Mosaic Youth Theatre Council. A 3-year study on the Mosaic youth council "found a significant positive impact on life skills: how youth conduct themselves, organize their time, manage stress, lead a group, maintain a positive sense of self, interact with people of different backgrounds and set ambitious personal goals" (Hirzy, 2013, p. 7). Participating in a study may be too ambitious for a new youth council, but it can become part of long-time goal to further communicate the value of all youth councils in local regions which do not currently have them.

The RYWG (2008) suggests the following steps to undertake a youth council evaluation:

1. Youth members develop the evaluation tool—participatory evaluation enhances relevance
2. Reasons for evaluation—what and why topics were evaluated will shape how to make improvements
3. Indicators of success—developing indicators will provide for accurate measurement
4. Methods—a balanced number of approaches that can be tracked and recorded
5. Tools for information collection—surveys, spread sheets, interviews, focus group, photographs and videos developed by youth
6. Get that information—acquiring the information through evaluation tools and following through on the evaluation plan
7. Determining the implications and meaning—using gathered evaluation and feedback to inform positive action

8. Findings—reporting to all partners through an accurate but creative tool
9. Act on results—the purpose of the evaluation. (pp. 32-34)

The significant function of evaluating the program, their findings, and their experiences will start around step 5, although it will have happened in some way with each progressive step. A sample evaluation form that was adapted from the GenerationOn handbook can be found in Appendix B.

As stated previously, formal youth council evaluation should be performed one time per year. However, informal evaluation can be happening throughout the year in discussions or special meetings that engage adolescents in reflecting on their experiences and achievements but also keeps them focused on “what works, what needs improvement, and what should be eliminated” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 46).

Youth Council: Revision of Priorities and Programs

Evaluating is not an isolated activity. For evaluation to have significant meaning it must be the first step in the goals of revising the program for sustainable improvements and establishing a cycle of evaluation and revision that moves the youth council forward. Authentic revision requires that the youth council honestly assesses the information garnered from evaluations to identify both the negative and positive evidence. Once an evaluation is complete, needs and goals must be adapted to reflect the priorities necessitated by the evaluation.

For youth councils in art galleries or art museums this process will be focused on using the feedback from the evaluation for two purposes. The first is to “refine and design appealing and appropriate programming that keeps them engaged and coming back year after year” (Hirzy, 2011, p. 46). The second is to develop the communication tool that

can be shared with community partners and that will launch the resulting activities of organizing the projects for the next calendar year. The research suggests that the end result of revision is not “the quantity of arts participation; rather there is a need to ensure quality factors such as engagement” (Martin et al., 2013, p. 723). Revision is both the beginning and ending stages of strategic planning.

Strategic planning is an organizational practice that facilitates decisions which ultimately spur the action that will shape the program. As well, it provides an understanding of the “what” and “why” of the program (Bryson, 2011). Strategic planning will address the needs of the youth council and its partners by improving program performance through the use of existing and potential resources, clarification of the program context, shared decision making, stakeholder communication, and support for the intended program (Bryson, 2011). The strategic plan that follows the revision process needs to reflect the purposes of the whole evaluation and revision process.

Over time, the number of members on your council and the strategic plans that they develop “will change depending on capacity and need” (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 58). To address any issues that result from this inevitable progression, a mentoring chain needs to be in place. This mentoring chain will ensure that the handbook and the program are updated. It will facilitate new council members as they prepare to take over roles vacated by members who are moving on for various reasons. Hopefully, it will assure the practice of a few members volunteering to stay on to aid in transitional times. This will, ultimately, enhance the process of strategic planning through evaluation and revision (GenerationOn, 2012, p. 58). Appendix C presents an example of a revision process.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The journey for the realization of this MRP began many years ago, although I was not aware of it at the time. It also began in another country where I, as a teenager, experienced the wonder and value of discovering art in the non-school environment of a youth arts council. After university in Slovenia, I moved to Canada to continue my studies in education. It was here in the Niagara Region that I realized that this culture rich community was missing an important piece of the arts puzzle—a youth council in an art gallery or art museum.

All the research undertaken supports the intrinsic value of establishing youth councils in both rural and urban communities. The skills acquired through participation in youth councils in art galleries and art museums, and all youth councils in general, are identified as critical to learning and working in the 21st century. The “why” of youth councils as supportive of learning in schools as well as supportive of learning in life has been shared in this paper. Therefore, the focus of this work became the “how”; how to establish an effective youth council in an art gallery or art museum. The direction and support for this initiative was in the creation of a handbook that would be a practical and coherent tool for the staff of art galleries and art museums in the Niagara Region. The handbook provides definitions, information and research, approaches to policy development, and examples of helpful hints to aid in success and in the anticipation of obstacles. It offers guidance in areas such as vision and mission statements, as well as goal setting. I strongly agree with the sentiments of Norma Rosso (2010) who wrote about cuts and changes in cultural organizations:

Organizations are now facing the prospect of major hurdles ranging from funding

cuts to lack of time and resources, and there is a danger that these activities will be drastically reduced or cease altogether if they are not fully supported. We hope that organizations will be able to continue their work and find new ways of making young people an integral part of our cultural institutions. (p. 6)

In closing, if the Arts are to thrive in the Niagara Region, the time to act is now. More programming opportunities need to be made available to the youth population in order that sustainability and capacity are developed for the ongoing growth of Art Education in the Niagara Region.

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[Advisory-Council-stage-1.pdf](http://www.youthpowerny.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Starting-a-Youth-Advisory-Council-stage-1.pdf)

Appendix A

Youth Council Application Form

LOGO OF YOUR ART
GALLERY OR ART
MUSEUM

YOUTH COUNCIL APPLICATION FORM

Adapted from <http://www.youraga.ca/wp-content/uploads/AGA-Youth-Council-Application.pdf>

[Name of the organization] youth council is available to students age [age range] with an interest in the arts. No prior experience is necessary. Please complete the following application form and submit to: [email of a person in charge] by [date]

ABOUT YOU

FIRST NAME	
LAST NAME	
STREET ADDRESS	
CITY, PROVINCE, POSTAL CODE	
PHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
STREET ADDRESS	

ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

SCHOOL NAME	
GRADE	
TEACHER REFERENCE	
REFERENCE PHONE NUMBER	
REFERENCE E-MAIL ADDRESS	

INTERESTS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF?

--

WHAT OTHER GROUPS OR ACTIVITIES ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING THE [NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION] YOUTH COUNCIL?

WHAT EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AT THE [NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION] YOUTH COUNCIL?

PAST EXPERIENCE

TELL US ABOUT ANY PAST EXPERIENCES OR SPECIAL SKILLS THAT MAKE YOU AN IDEAL CANDIDATE FOR THE YOUTH COUNCIL. IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT ARE YOUR "SUPER POWERS"?

FUTURE PLANS

WHAT ARE THE HOPES AND PLANS FOR YOUR PERSONAL FUTURE?

--

EMERGENCY CONTACT

NAME	
PHONE NUMBER	
ALTERNATE PHONE NUMBER	
E-MAIL ADDRESS	

AGREEMENT AND SIGNATURE

By submitting this application, I affirm that the facts set forth in it are true and complete. I understand that if I am accepted as a volunteer, any false statements, omissions, or other misrepresentations made by me on this application may result in my immediate dismissal.

NAME (PRINTED)	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	

OUR POLICY

It is the policy of this youth organization to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, faith, national origin, gender, lifestyle preference, age or physical challenges.

Thank you for completing this application form and for your interest in volunteering on [NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION] Youth Council!

Appendix B

Yearly Youth Council Feedback Form

YEARLY YOUTH COUNCIL FEEDBACK FORM

As the Youth Council closes our calendar year, we need to reflect and to share our ideas in order to evaluate the year's work and to discuss ideas which need to be considered for next year.

Please, fully consider the following statements and questions. Your thoughtful attention will help us determine which issues need review and decisions as we proceed with the youth council program through the next calendar year.

Please be specific and honest.

Name (optional): _____

Year: _____

FEEDBACK

Which of the following influenced your decision to apply for the Youth Advisory Council?

- The chance to learn about art and the art gallery or art museum
- The opportunity to participate in youth-led out-of-school activities
- The opportunity to meet new people and make new friends
- The volunteer hours required for school
- A desire to change my community
- Other

Please explain: _____

What was the biggest obstacle or challenge you faced? How were you able to meet it?

What is your favorite memory from the program so far? Describe it in detail; what was happening? How did you feel? _____

How do you feel about being a member of this program and how it has impacted your engagement in school or the community?

What do you think is effective in the way the program is designed? _____

What do you wish you would have seen or experienced during the program? _____

What did you think was ineffective or could have been made better? _____

Regarding balancing a very busy school and social schedule, how can our staff be more accommodating and helpful in creating a sensible balance between all of your commitments? _____

Your final thoughts: _____

Appendix C

The Revision Process: Facilitating Revisions Through Stakeholders

THE REVISION PROCESS: FACILITATING REVISIONS THROUGH STAKEHOLDERS

STAKEHOLDER CATEGORIES	STAKEHOLDER LIST (name, organization, and contact information).	STRATEGIC PLANNING WORKGROUP (who is invited)	STAKEHOLDER ROLE (in the strategic planning process)
<i>PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS</i> (e.g., youth, parents, teachers, community members)			
<i>STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTERS</i> (e.g., program staff, agency administrators, contractors)			
<i>INTENDED USERS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN</i> (youth council in the art gallery or art museum and community partners)			

Adapted from http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/evaluation/pdf/sp_kit/sp_toolkit.pdf

Appendix D
The Handbook



establishing a youth council in a
local art gallery or art museum

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Appendix 20

Adolescence is the most crucial time in an individual's life. It is a time when minds can be opened to new ideas and concepts; personalities can flourish and shape the adult that the adolescent will become.

YOUTH COUNCIL



Youth councils in art galleries and art museums are community associations that encourage and unleash the potential, positive power of adolescent energy and inspire growth in the artistic drive that is still developing.

A youth council is a free group attended by adolescent art enthusiasts who periodically gather in a gallery or museum setting to individually or collectively work on topics, ideas, or motives that are inspired by them. In this artistically engaging process, youth expand their creativity, communication, leadership and collaboration skills as well as their social skills.

This handbook was formed to ease the process of establishing a youth council in your local art gallery or art museum. If you are an art educator or an associate of art gallery and want to find a niche for younger generation to be involved in art, this handbook provides the help you will require to establish an effective youth council.

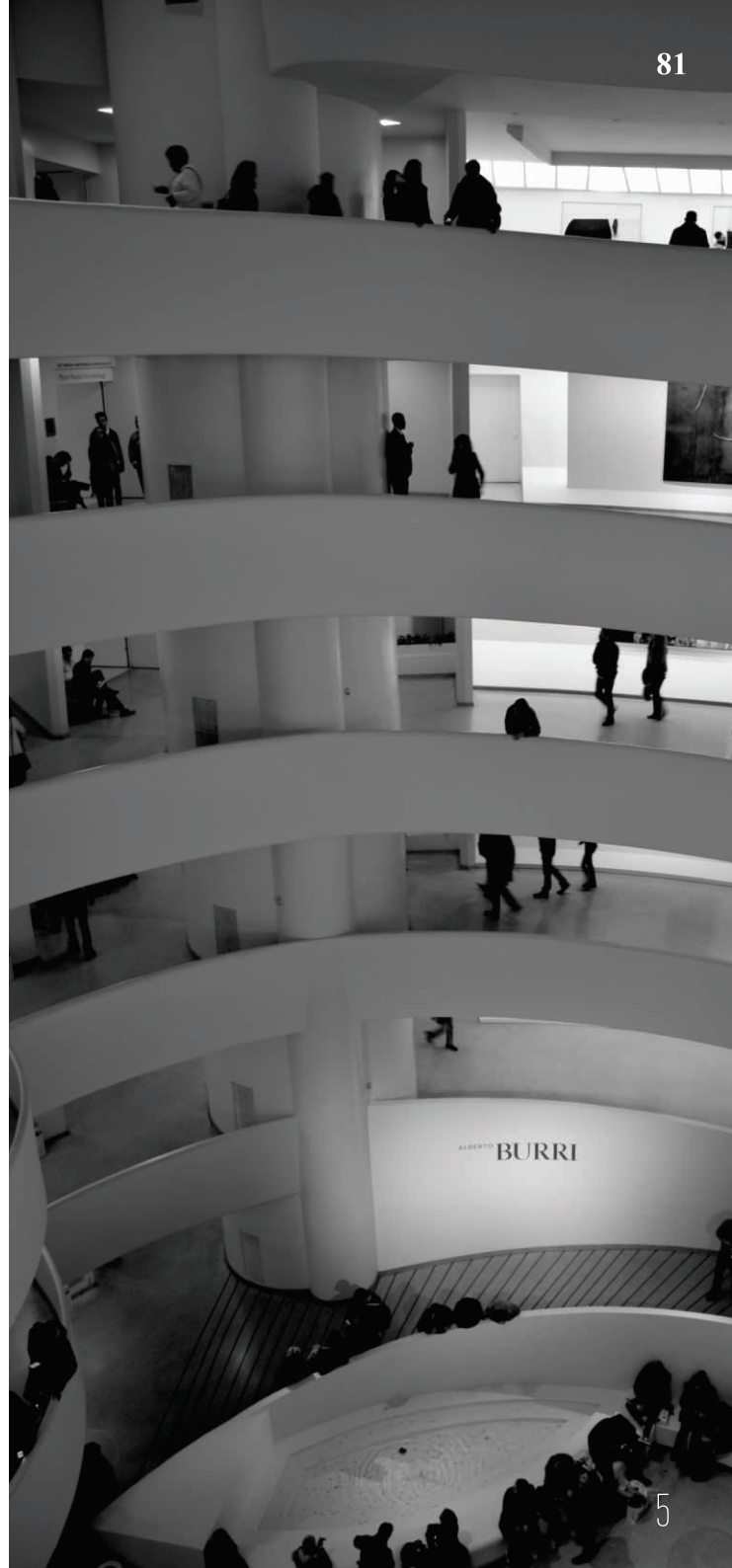
WHY DOES YOUR LOCAL ART GALLERY OR ART MUSEUM NEED A YOUTH COUNCIL?

On an art gallery or art museum youth council, adolescent students are exposed to the possibilities identified by Ontario's Ministry of Education and their participation in the arts as an extra-curricular activity will nourish the imagination and develop a sense of beauty, while providing unique ways for students to gain insights into the world around them.

Youth councils promote lifelong learning of art and when establishing youth councils, local art museums and art galleries will also be helping adolescents to develop skills necessary for living and learning in the twenty-first century. Six basic competencies, important to finding a sense of place in the adolescent years in order to prepare for life as an adult, are needed for the twenty-first century:

- **Character** which is distinguished by perseverance, reliability and adaptability
- Engaged **citizenship** and genuine interest in the world around them
- The ability to **communicate** in writing, orally and digitally
- The ability to **critically think**, connect and construct meaning and apply it in real world circumstances
- **Collaborative** skills to work interdependently on teams, manage themselves in team dynamics and learn and contribute to the learning of their team mates
- **Creativity** coupled with an entrepreneurial spirit

Equally important as the educational value of youth councils is the fact that the adolescents can have fun while participating in the many opportunities. The importance of **fun** cannot be underestimated. The simple promises of **food**, the occasional **freebie** and the value of new **friendships** offer adolescents the opportunity to positively experience the importance of making connections in new settings.



GETTING EVERYONE IN THE INSTITUTION ON THE SAME PAGE

An introductory, informational meeting inviting the ideas and participation of all staff and community partners will set a collegial tone and will be helpful in minimizing resistance or other potential conflicts. A youth council in your art gallery or art museum is going to bring the voices of adolescents into the already established adult leadership of an organization; that is why it is important for all parties involved with the council to be fully supportive. Organizations must explain to all partners in the youth council endeavor the benefits of the youth council (see previous page). Be prepared to answer many questions such as:

- What value will the youth council add to our organization?
- Are young people responsible enough to manage projects?
- Are youth capable of improving our programs? Aren't we doing enough already?
- How do we know that youth will be interested in serving our organization?

A primary purpose which could be advocated, no matter what the question is, can be found in the experiences of other youth councils. Being able to understand what goes on during this pivotal period of individual development and building programs that promote adolescents' assets will enable an organization to benefit from teens' high levels of energy, creativity, and commitment.



Angela Blackwell, the curator at the Thelma Hulbert Gallery, in the UK, reflected that **having the group made a big difference both to the way young people see the gallery and how the gallery presents itself.** Her own professional work was altered because of the young people's views on the use of space in the gallery. Blackwell also remarked that the public enjoyed seeing the young people's work in relation to the main exhibitions.

PROVIDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR YOUR YOUTH COUNCIL

A youth council should be planned with a long term vision that assures its future. One of the important steps of establishing a sustainable youth council is brainstorming about its purpose, meaning and consequently, the vision and mission statements. When a youth council is organized around clear goals and expectations, it is more likely to have assured future. This is in part what the youth council hopes to achieve through a life-long commitment to learning and self-discovery that can translate into successful adulthood.

Youth will be engaged deeper in the program if the program connects with their issues and interest. Here are several suggestions, to further ensure sustainability:

- **Accurate and consistent funding**

Start-up funding is often short term funding. Knowing this, youth councils need to pursue and secure continuous funding in order to make their council viable and sustainable.

- **Community networks**

The more information known about the youth council in the art gallery or art museum and its initiatives, the more likely you will receive financial and event support. Relationships with the media—newspapers, local television, radio, and reputable Internet sites—are the key to a strong community network as media is a tremendously effective vehicle for this and can be employed to promote the mission of the council and its various activities.

- **Collegial and jovial atmosphere**

An inviting, collegial and happy atmosphere goes a long way to keeping people committed.

- **Regular meetings**

Regular meetings keep the communication flow consistent and proactive. They allow for discussions, reports and team unity. An active council keeps its members participating through shared meetings organized through a purposeful agenda.

- **Rewards and recognition for contributors**

Recognition is a welcome celebration of achievement. While participation on the youth council is a reward in its own right, the appreciation and recognition of adolescents at this critical time of their personal development is always a good idea.

- **Long-term planning**

There should be a process in place for when leaders of the youth council leave the group. Knowledge transfer is vital to the sustainability of the Council.



FUNDING SOURCES

Table 1
Types of Funding for an Art Gallery or Art Museum

Government support	Private sources	Fundraising
In Ontario: Ontario Arts Council and Trillium Foundation of Ontario	Private organizations and individuals that would like to donate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ticket sales for the final exhibition– Sales of projects products– Holiday centered special events

- **Ontario Arts Council (OAC)**

On the Ontario Arts Council's website (<http://www.arts.on.ca/Page54.aspx>) basic information about the OAC can be found. OAC was founded with a mandate to foster the creation and production of art for the benefit of all Ontarians. The OAC website also provides clear instructions about the steps necessary to apply for funding; <http://www.arts.on.ca/Page17.aspx>.

- **Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF)**

The Ontario Trillium Foundation is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and one of Canada's largest granting foundations. All the further instructions can be found on their website (<http://www.otf.ca/who-we-are?redirected=1>).

- **Donations**

Private businesses, individuals or other organizations that are willing to donate money can do so. They are welcome to donate small amounts of money to help with an activity, supplies, product or service donations.

- **Fundraising**

When brainstorming fundraising for the art gallery or art museum, think about the innovative, special and exciting approaches that differ from the usual ways of raising funds. The fundraising can be team building practice for youth members as well as the way youth socialize while having fun. Fundraising can also be the opportunity for youth to learn about managing complex tasks, managing funds, and gaining practical knowledge in marketing and sales.

- **Social networks**

Twenty-first century technology offers new avenues for large scale communication and can be very helpful for fundraising. Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram offer an alternative means of attracting donors and securing funding. The management of all donations and revenues should be well planned and is best administered as co-responsibility. It is recommended that there is an adult coordinator who sets up a bank account and keeps track of the budget. However, it is also recommended that the adolescents be mentored in this responsibility through a collaborative process that teaches them the necessary skills while providing adult supervision for discussion and feedback.

ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS

- **Age**

In order to establish an efficient and effective youth council a diverse membership population is needed. The word youth generally refers to a time of life that is neither childhood nor adulthood, but rather somewhere in between. It is suggested to include different age spans and the targeted group of youth should include high school students and may include college or university students who want to be a part of any kind of visual art enterprise. Since collaboration is the key in the relationships on youth councils, the age difference can be used to uncover potential leaders in the future, because younger youth can learn from older youth about how the council works.

- **Diversity**

Diversity in the youth council helps ensure a variety of viewpoints and encourages creativity in discussions. The goal is to enroll youth from different socio-economic conditions, faiths, gender, sexual orientation, race and family structures.

- **Participation obstacles**

The issues that may occur while establishing a youth council are the barriers of the mind. Barriers of the mind are less visible but not less important to understand. Some teens may believe that the arts are only for certain people; barriers of the mind are less visible but not less important to understand. Some teens may believe that the arts are only for certain people, so you will need to bridge the racial, cultural, and economic divides that create this barrier.

Several major youth councils have identified some of the common barriers as location, access, atmosphere, safety, time, ethnic diversity and program costs. Some of these participation obstacles can be easily solved by collaborative problem-solving.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ON THE YOUTH COUNCIL

Staff Support

Roles for adults can vary from advisor to facilitator to coordinator or subject matter expert. Whatever the role, the adult associated with it must use a two-tiered approach. One will involve **mentoring** and the other will involve **supervision** of the mentored skill. Adults do not have to be involved in all aspects of a youth council but in those roles and responsibilities that require expertise, sensitivity, safety and regulation, adult involvement must be constant to ensure the trust of the adolescents, their parents and guardians, the organization's staff and the community partners.

Adult responsibility is to ensure that policies and standards for youth are provided, evaluated and continuously improved as youth involvement and requirements change.

Adult-Adolescent Interactions on Youth Council

Several key attitudes need to shape the cultural environment of the youth council. The value of young people's involvement should be authentically respected as a viable source of knowledge and action.

There is a sensitivity required when dealing with the differences between helping students learn and thrive in roles and responsibilities and forcing them to take on adult roles. Therefore, attention must be paid to creating equal and real opportunities for adolescents to work from their strengths and to grow from their challenges.

Pre-establishing a Youth Advisory Team for the Youth Council

Pre-establishing a youth advisory team for a youth council will probably require creating an advisory team, comprised of two to three adolescents, who can assist the adults in the art gallery or art museum youth council. This advisory group will be the core of the community you hope to build for adolescents and the starting point for your engagement effort. The purpose of the advisory team on the youth council is to increase communication and collaboration between youth and adults. As well, the advisory team may participate in program design, branding and messaging, marketing and recruitment, evaluation before the actual first meeting of the youth council.

It is suggested that an advisory team is intentionally created before the youth council itself and that this team is established through focused interviews and survey groups. Once the advisory team has been formed, they can begin the work of designing a pre-program and branding the message of the youth council. Also, they can help in marketing and recruitment strategies because they are knowledgeable about the teen market, and in touch with their peer group.

DESIGNING A PROGRAM FOR TEENS WITH TEENS

The knowledge of the key tasks of adolescent development should drive the program design. The art gallery or art museum staff should seek consultations with teachers and other experts that will enrich the process because, professionals in other adolescent centered occupations such as a professionally trained counselor or social worker can help you with this aspect of program design, as well as provide support to you and your students as the program develops.

For the establishment of an effective program make sure to **include youth in the program design** as well as follow next design principles:

- **Simplicity can be as effective as complexity** – the secret is in the size of the youth council and age range of the participants. Research shows that youth councils usually involve more than thirty five young people, mostly between the ages of sixteen or seventeen years old.
- **Measurable outcomes must be designed with the needs of the teen audience in mind** – the first step in defining and measuring outcomes tailored for teens is a needs assessment that lets you know where the students are in terms of knowledge, experience and ability. Following the needs assessment, which can be done formally or informally, create a series of statements that address intrapersonal, interpersonal, communication, community and artistic development. Sample statements are listed below:
 - Students will enhance existing and develop new artistic skills (artistic)
 - Students will develop creative and critical thinking to aid in the creation process (artistic)
 - Students will practice leadership and decision-making abilities (interpersonal, intrapersonal and communication)
 - Students will feel support from adults and peers in personal and group work (intrapersonal)
 - Students will feel empowered in positive risk taking (artistic)
 - Students will build strong relationships with community members (community)
- **Learning should be collaborative and youth-centered** – this can happen by building a program with various formats and opportunities that require the participants to create, reflect, discuss, revise, and present activities.
- **Newer and traditional forms of media should be balanced with emerging technologies** – media and technology are unavoidable partners to any aspect of today's youth activities. Invite your youth advisory council to recommend effective integration of technology and the best use of social media for–marketing, communication, and sharing the creative product.

- **Positive risk taking is encouraged** – risk taking can be a growth opportunity not only for the teenagers but also for the adults. Artistic and individual benefits from the holistic youth engagement approach accrue over time through a process of artistic, individual, and social development.

Program design, together with the creation of the vision statement, mission statement and setting the goals should be established through the final meeting in the art gallery or art museum, with all stakeholders and associates present.

Mission Statement

Mission statements should reflect three basic ideas: what the organization can offer clients and patrons, what it offers its members and what it can offer those in charge. Lately, organizations have come to include what they can offer the community and what they can offer the world. A strong mission statement is concise, striking and unambiguous.

Vision Statement

The vision statement communicates what the organization aspires to be in the future, sets the direction for growth and provides the guidelines to achieve it. A youth council may choose to develop both a mission statement and a vision statement. The first will address what they plan to do throughout the year while the second will speak to their long term aspirations as an organization

Setting Goals

It is always best to set challenging goals rather than effortless goals. Long-term goals provide vision and direction for short-term projects and sustain concepts of shared vision and common goals. Since every youth council should be created and organized for youth by youth, the program design for the adolescents' goal setting process follows familiar principles: agree on purpose, match approach and content to the target audience, define outcomes and impact, and assess effectiveness.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS FOR THE YOUTH COUNCIL

There is no single approach and no agreed definition of what youth-led activities entail. The big picture of the activities has to be clear and always directly related to the objectives outlined in the goal statement.

The following lists present projects of the youth councils at the AGO and The Power Plant, respectively. Examples of AGO youth council projects (which are described in greater detail at <http://www.ago.net/youth-council-archive>) include:

- Singing Softly Ehen No One's Around
- Fear
- Agency
- The Cause
- InTENse

Examples of The Power Plant's Power Youth projects (which also are detail on the gallery's website at <http://thepowerplant.org/ProgramsEvents/Programs/Power-Youth.aspx>) include:

- Radiant City
- Propel
- In our shoes
- Building the Block
- Silkscreen Power Up!
- Building Beyond: Legacy 3015



RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

One of the first steps towards recruiting new members for a youth council in an art gallery or art museum is through local high schools.

The following tables are intended to provide art gallery education officers and educational partners in the community, an understanding of the municipalities that are most likely to be recruited from youth councils in relation to their local art galleries or art museums.

Table 2
Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—District School Board of Niagara (DSBN)

DSBN school	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
A N Myer Secondary School	9.1	17.1	9.4	40.9	33.6
Beamsville District Secondary School	41.8	20.3	41.1	8.8	45.6
Centennial Secondary School	19.3	18.8	35.6	47.4	13.8
DSBN Academy	21.8	1.7	20.1	30.5	30.8
E L Crossley Secondary School	23.5	16.3	33.5	33.4	22.4
Eastdale Secondary School	15.4	22.4	35.3	49.3	14
Eden High School	22.1	5.4	19.6	26.3	38.4
Fort Erie Secondary School	26	47.2	43.4	70.7	30.9
Governor Simcoe Secondary School	22.1	7	19.6	28.8	38.7
Grimsby Secondary School	47.5	31.3	46.8	1.4	54.9
Laura Secord Secondary School	20	4.8	17.5	28.5	36.5
Port Colborne High School	26.6	36.5	46.6	57.5	1.4
Lifetime Learning Centre Secondary School	22.1	5.4	19.6	26.3	38.4
Ridgeway-Crystal Beach High School	22.4	43.3	41.5	67.2	17.6
Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School	19.5	4.6	19.2	31.7	31.7
South Lincoln High School	64.7	30	54.3	14.3	41.5
St. Catharines Collegiate Institute and Vocational School	20.2	2.9	17.7	27.2	35
Stamford Collegiate	5.6	19.4	12.6	43.2	31.7
Thorold Secondary School	15.5	7.4	16.9	34.5	31.2
Westlane Secondary School	5.1	17.4	16	43.3	27.4

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Table 3

Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—Niagara Catholic District School Board (NCDSB)

NCDSB school	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School	48.2	41.9	47.5	2.1	55.9
Denis Morris Catholic High School	20.3	3.5	19.6	31.2	30.3
Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School	21.5	7.2	19	30.8	38.9
Lakeshore Catholic High School	25	34.9	43.3	57.3	1.8
Notre Dame College School	18.2	19.8	35.7	48.7	13.7
Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School	22.4	5.6	19.9	26.5	38.6
Saint Michael Catholic High School	3.7	19.1	18.7	45.9	24.9
Saint Paul Catholic High School	7.7	16.7	11.1	40.5	32.7

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Table 4

Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud (CSDCC-S)

CSDCC-S school	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
École Secondaire Catholique Jean-Vanier	19.8	19.6	32.7	64.6	15.6

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Table 5

Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—Conseil scolaire Viamonde (CSV)

CSV school	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
École Secondaire Confédération	15.3	22.3	36.2	49.2	14.6

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Table 6
Anticipated Distance (Kilometers) From School to Art Gallery or Art Museum—Private Schools in Niagara Region

Private schools in Niagara Region	NFAG	RHAC	RBAM	GPAG	APG
Beacon Christian School	22.8	5.1	19.7	27.2	36.6
Niagara Christian Collegiate	20.1	40.9	38.1	64.8	28.5
Ridley College	23.1	1.3	19.6	29.6	35.8
Royal Elite International Academy	22.8	16.7	11.1	41.5	44.8

Note. NFAG: Niagara Falls Art Gallery; RHAC: Rodman Hall Art Centre; RBAM: RiverBrink Art Museum; GPAG: Grimsby Public Art Gallery; APG: Arts Place Gallery.

Tables 2 to 6 are also intended to provide art gallery education officers and educational partners in the community with an understanding of the municipalities that are most likely to be recruited from youth councils in relation to their local art galleries or art museums. There are also several private/independent schools in Niagara that are organized under a variety of faiths, such as Christian Reformed and Anglican. These include Beacon Christian School, Niagara Christian Collegiate, Ridley College, and Royal Elite International Academy.

Next to recruiting participants through high schools, you can also use the following strategies:

- word of mouth
- peer-to-peer recruitment
- data bases, guest books, e-mail contacts
- advertisement through local media
- advertisement on social media

Application Form

The application form for recruitment should include applicants' personal information, such as their emergency contact, personal interests, past experience and future plans, as well as explicit agreement and the signature of the applicant as well as their guardian in the case of underage students. Also, provide an email contact on the website of your art gallery or art museum, for any further questions or information the future youth council members might have. Appendix includes an example of an application form for a youth council in an art gallery or art museum.

EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH COUNCIL'S PROGRAM

There are many reasons to evaluate the youth council and the majority of them fall into one of these five areas that:

- Celebrating successes
- Investigating improvements
- Building a case for funding
- Communicating to and with the community to demonstrate successes,
- Promoting the Youth Council and fostering relationships

For the effective evaluation it is suggested to follow these nine guidelines:

1. Youth members develop the **evaluation tool** – participatory evaluation enhances relevance
2. **Reasons** for evaluation – what and why topics were evaluated will shape how to make improvements
3. **Indicators of success** – developing indicators will provide for accurate measurement
4. **Methods** – a balanced number of approaches that can be tracked and recorded
5. **Tools** for information collection – surveys, spread sheets, interviews, focus group, photographs and videos developed by youth
6. **Get that information** – acquiring the information through evaluation tools and following through on the evaluation plan
7. **Determining the implications and meaning** – using gathered evaluation and feedback to inform positive action
8. **Findings** – reporting to all partners through an accurate but creative tool
9. **Act on results** – the purpose of the evaluation

REVISION OF PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMS

Authentic revision requires that the youth council honestly assesses the information garnered from evaluations to identify both the negative and positive evidence.

For youth councils in art galleries or art museums this process will be focused on using the feedback from the evaluation for two purposes:

1. to refine and design appealing and appropriate programming that keeps them engaged and coming back year after year and
2. to develop the communication tool that can be shared with community partners and that will launch the resulting activities of organizing the projects for the next calendar year.

To address any issues that result from this inevitable progression, a mentoring chain needs to be in place. This mentoring chain will ensure that the handbook and the program are updated. It will facilitate new council members as they prepare to take over roles vacated by members who are moving on for various reasons.



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Appendix

Youth Council Application Form

LOGO OF
YOUR ART GALLERY
OR ART MUSEUM

Youth Council Application Form

[Name of the organization] youth council is available to students age [age range] with an interest in the arts. No prior experience is necessary. Please complete the following application form and submit to: [email of a person in charge] by [date]

ABOUT YOU

FIRST NAME	
LAST NAME	
STREET ADDRESS	
CITY, PROVINCE, POSTAL CODE	
PHONE NUMBER	
EMAIL ADDRESS	
STREET ADDRESS	

ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

SCHOOL NAME	
GRADE	
TEACHER REFERENCE	
REFERENCE PHONE NUMBER	
REFERENCE E-MAIL ADDRESS	

INTERESTS ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF?

WHAT OTHER GROUPS OR ACTIVITIES ARE YOU INVOLVED IN?

WHY ARE YOU INTERESTED IN JOINING THE [NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION] YOUTH COUNCIL?

WHAT EVENTS OR ACTIVITIES WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AT THE [NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION] YOUTH COUNCIL?

PAST EXPERIENCE

TELL US ABOUT ANY PAST EXPERIENCES OR SPECIAL SKILLS THAT MAKE YOU AN IDEAL CANDIDATE FOR THE YOUTH COUNCIL. IN OTHER WORDS, WHAT ARE YOUR “SUPER POWERS”?

FUTURE PLANS

WHAT ARE THE HOPES AND PLANS FOR YOUR PERSONAL FUTURE?

EMERGENCY CONTACT

NAME	
PHONE NUMBER	
ALTERNATE PHONE NUMBER	
E-MAIL ADDRESS	

AGREEMENT AND SIGNATURE

By submitting this application, I affirm that the facts set forth in it are true and complete. I understand that if I am accepted as a volunteer, any false statements, omissions, or other misrepresentations made by me on this application may result in my immediate dismissal.

NAME (PRINTED)	
SIGNATURE	
DATE	

OUR POLICY

It is the policy of this youth organization to provide equal opportunities without regard to race, faith, national origin, gender, lifestyle preference, age or physical challenges.

Thank you for completing this application form and for your interest in volunteering on [NAME OF THE ORGANIZATION] Youth Council!



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Metka Manfreda

A life-long long learner, Metka was born in Slovenia, where she attended the University of Maribor and earned a Fine Arts Pedagogy degree. At Brock University, she fulfilled her next level of educational achievement in leadership and administration. When she isn't intellectually occupied, her interests include playing ice hockey at a competitive level and creating her own art.